DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 193 574 CG 014 735

AUTHOR Yahnke, Robert
TITLE Film and the Art of Aging.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 83p.

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Aging (Individuals); Alienation; Death; Developmental Stages; Filmographies; Humanistic Education; *Instructional Films; Interpersonal Relationship; *Older Adults; Resource Materials; *Single Concept Films; Stress Variables; *Values Education

ABSTRACT

This guide is intended as a resource for educators who wish to use films on aging to teach humanistic values. There are three main divisions in the guide: (1) descriptive and analytical notes on 12 films about aging, (2) suggestions for instructional programming, and (3) an annotated filmography. The first section includes film-study questions on topics related to aging. The second section contains lists of recommended films classified according to thematic categories (relationships, stress, and values) and age groups (elementary-age children through older adults). The third section provides descriptions of films not included in the first section, and information on film rental. (Author/CS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED193574

HARD COPY NOT AVAILABLE

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE
The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to: CG IR
In our judgement, this document is also of interest to the clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view.

FILM AND THE ART OF AGING

by

Robert Yahnke
General College

University of Minnesota

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Robert Yahnke
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS 014735

© 1979
Robert Yahnke

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION . . . . . p. 3

CHAPTER ONE: TWELVE FILMS--
Summary of Sequences/Film Study Notes/
Questions for Discussion

The Art of Age 6

The Blessings of Love 10

The Detour 13

Last Stand Farmer 16

Mailbox 19

Martin the Cobbler 23

Nell and Fred 27

One-Eyed Men Are Kings 31

Peege 34

The String-Bean 41

The Transformation of Mabel Wells 44

Weekend 47

CHAPTER TWO: SUGGESTED PROGRAMMING

Suggested Programming: Categories 49

List of Recommended Films 50

Films for Specific Age Groups 53

CHAPTER THREE: ANNOTATED CRITICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Introduction 54

Film Rental Information 56

Annotated Critical Bibliography 57

List of Distributors 80

INTRODUCTION

This workbook is intended for all persons who are interested in using films on aging in appropriate educational settings. Teachers, health care professionals, and religious educators are the primary groups addressed by this workbook, but whatever your area of work and interest, it is hoped that the workbook will prove to be a valuable resource and teaching instrument.

There are three major divisions to the structure of the book: detailed notes on Twelve Films, Suggested Programming, and an Annotated Critical Bibliography.

Chapter One: Twelve Films--

Each of the twelve films in this chapter include a Summary of Sequences, Film Study Notes, and Questions for Discussion:

Summary of Sequences--This summary offers a comprehensive record of the major action and dialogue in the film. If the user of a film cannot preview a film before showing it to an appropriate audience, the summary will enable that person to "read" the film and know exactly what takes place in it. If (s)he does preview the film, the summary will enable the film user to concentrate on the film itself, rather than having to take detailed notes at the same time.

Film Study Notes--These notes are addressed to all persons who will use the films. There is minimum reference to technical film terms. Instead, film techniques are referred to that will help the user better instruct audiences with regard to attitudes and themes on aging expressed in the films.

Questions for Discussion--A wide range of questions, from questions on specific scenes to ones on concepts of aging, are included in this section. Film users should consider the questions noted as suggestions to encourage reflective thinking on the part of the audience and as a means to stimulate audience participation in group discussion.

Chapter Two: Suggested Programming--

This section is intended to help persons who use films on aging discover new ways films may be combined in their programming. Lists of recommended films accompany several subject categories, and films that are particularly suitable to specific age groups are also noted, so that the film user may match the right film with the right audience.

Chapter Three: Annotated Critical Bibliography--

This section provides specific analyses of films <u>not</u> listed in Chapter One. Each annotation includes a brief

summary of the film's content, some analysis of the film's qualities, and a recommendation of suitable audiences for the film.

Information on where and how films can be rented is available in the section FILM RENTAL INFORMATION

NOTE: The author is solely responsible for the organization, content, and critical commentary in the workbook.

* * * * * * * *

Acknowledgements:

The author wishes to thank the following people for their gracious assistance in the preparation of this workbook: Elizabeth Bingaman, Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center; Joan DeNeui, Audio-Visual Library Service, University of Minnesota; and Teri Lawson, General College, University of Minnesota.

NOTE:

The author is interested in hearing from people who have used the resources included in this workbook. If you have comments on the structure of the workbook, the apparatus contained in the first chapter, or the assessments made of films in the bibliography, I would like to hear from you. Also, if you have suggestions for improving the format or contents of the workbook, please let me know. Write to:

Robert Yahnke
106 Nicholson Hall
216 Pillsbury Dr. S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

CHAPTER ONE: 12 FILMS

* *

The Art of Age
The Blessings of Love
The Detour
Last Stand Farmer
Mailbox
Martin the Cobbler
Nell and Fred
One-Eyed Men Are Kings
Peege
The String-Bean
The Transformation of Mabel Wells
Weekend

* * *

Summary of Sequences
Film Study Notes
Questions for Discussion

The Art of Age

Summary of Sequences

1. We begin with a shot of a retired black man, cleaning fish in his front yard. "A lot of people at my age are unhappy because they don't think about living. They think about dying. I think death will take care of itself. What you want to do is to live."

2. The director follows this with a montage of three other people the film will focus on in its exploration of the art of age. We see in turn a woman artist, a woman at work on tatting in her home, and a man on his way to work at a grade school.

3. We start with the white man, retired for three years, arriving at a grade school, where he takes part in a volunteer program that utilizes senior citizens as tutors for children who have learning problems. He notes that it was "very important to become intensely interested in something of great importance to myself." He explains his role as tutor.

   We then see the black man fishing on the coast. He notes that having "some type of hobby" is important to an older person, because "usually we wear ourselves out with our inactivity."

   The woman in her home is shown tatting, skillfully moving her hands to create patterns with the thread. Retired for thirteen years, she is now working on a historical novel and busy writing letters to friends. She is an invalid, suffering from a crippling bone disease, but she tries to face this trial optimistically.

   The fourth person, an artist, enrolled as a full-time student when she retired eight years ago. We see her at work on various media: clay, stone, metal, plastic, wood. She even finds art objects in a junkyard.

4. Again we see the white man, at work with a young black boy. He tutors the boy to help him improve his reading ability.

   The black man works with his church for the Watts Community Ministry, and he is shown speaking to a senior citizens club, encouraging them to look their best and to make sure that they receive needed services.

   The woman artist is shown with many young artists, who visit her workshop and learn new styles of art from her. She is shown spending time with them, as they work together to create works of art.

   The woman in her home is visited by a friend, who asks her how she is able to face the pain she suffers. The woman tells her that she tries to relax herself the best she can. She speaks with determination of being able to face her suffering. "I'm more likely to cure my doctor than he is to cure me," she laughs.

5. The black man says, "I don't consider myself retired. After it comes to the point when I can't help others, can't work in the church, and can't work in the community, then I'll consider myself retired."

   As the artist molds tiny clay figures with her hands, she encourages others to identify and realize the artistic element in their own natures.

   The white man walks down the street toward his school, and we hear his voice: "Being retired, I almost feel I am going back to school again and relearning the things I had forgotten." He stands in the playground,

Summary of Sequences: The Art of Age (2)

looking around, as if lost in thought. We hear the voices of the black student and him, as they work on the boy's reading and speaking ability.

We return to the conversation between the visitor and the invalid woman. She declares that she does not believe in sustaining life when a person has lost all the vital signs. "I think it is dreadful to have a person linger on the edge." Then she adds, "When I discover that I'm not dead, I think, well what do I do next?" We hold on a close-up of her at this point.

6. Music begins, and we are shown a montage of the hands of these "artists" of age--the woman artist, the fisherman, the tutor, and the invalid. Another nine shots follow, again with the focus on their hands. Finally, the rhythm of the music changes, and we see another twenty-four shots of their hands, each time in action, and the editing follows the rhythm of the music. This sequence ends with four close-ups of the faces of the four people.

* * * * * * * *

Film Study Notes

EDITING

In order to emphasize the similarities between the stories of the four older people, the editing separates their stories:

1) the black man's comments serve as a general introduction to the experiences of all four people. Each one has decided that "death will take care of itself." Each one is thinking about living.

2) section two provides a visual introduction to the other three people.

3) section three focuses on the importance of a hobby, or an avocational interest after retirement. All four people are shown participating in and/or describing the interests that have helped them cope with aging.

4) section four develops some of the areas of interest introduced in the previous section. In this way we learn a little more about each of the people.

5) in section five all four make some conclusions about how their experiences affect their attitudes toward aging and how others may learn from their experiences.

6) the final section synthesizes the story of these four people by focusing on one unifying symbol- their hands. The "art of age" is revealed in the rhythmic movement of their hands, communicating, laboring, holding, gesturing, waving, writing, touching.

Film Study Notes: The Art of Age (2)

Montage: in section six, thirty-five separate shots are combined, accompanied with music, showing the hands of all four people in action. Each time we see a shot of a person's hand, we have a link to an earlier scene. Thus, in each case we know whose hands we are seeing, we have some idea of what they are doing, and we are able to feel something about that person. In this sense, the combination of shots that creates the montage depends on that emotional response we make to the subject, which in this film is derived from our response to the experiences and attitudes of the four people. Note that this montage would not have been successful at the beginning of the film, because we would have lacked the necessary relationships between the symbol (hands) and the subjects.

* * * * * * * *

Questions for Discussion

I. The People.

1. How were the four people's stories examples of successful aging? Which individual impressed you as the most successful example? Why?

2. Which of the four people do you think had to make the greatest changes in their retirement? How well did that person adapt to those changes?

3. What did these four stories have in common?

4. In what ways were all of these people "artists"?

5. Do you think these four people represent an accurate cross-section of older people? Why?

6. How is work an important part of these four persons' lives--even after retirement?

7. Suppose that a sequel to this film were made, focusing on the experiences of one of the four people we see in "The Art of Age." Which person would you like the sequel to be devoted to? Why?

II. The Art of Age.

8. What do you think is the meaning of the title of the film, "The Art of Age"?

9. How did the lengthy montage (combination of shots) at the end of the film affect you? Why were the shots close-up of hands? Why not close-ups of faces, for example?

Questions for Discussion: The Art of Age (2)

10. What do you think is the message of this film for people who have retired? What is the message for people who have not yet retired?

11. How are the stories of these four people relevant to the needs and concerns of religious groups?

The Blessings of Love

Summary of Sequences

1. In animated form, we see the outlined figures of three young men seated in a cafe, whispering among themselves. In the foreground a young boy stands outside, watching the young men. The camera moves in to focus on the young boy, as he imagines himself in the place of one of the three young men. This scene ends when a large pendulum moves slowly across the screen, blacking out all that remains behind it.

2. When the pendulum returns across the screen, we see him having achieved his dream. He <u>is</u> the young man sitting with two of his friends in a cafe, and all three are whispering among themselves. When an attractive young woman walks by their table, the young man turns to stare at her. But she is attended by a handsome older man, and it is obvious she is a captive of his charms. Our young man imagines himself in the place of the handsome older man. Again the pendulum moves across the screen.

3. When it returns, we see him again having realized his dream. Now he is a handsome older man, sitting next to a beautiful young woman in a cafe. As they talk, he imagines himself in bed with her. The swinging pendulum intervenes, and the next scene shows him in bed with his new wife. The music swells at this climax, but we see the young man imagining a time when he was with his wife before they were married.

4. After another swing of the pendulum, we see the two at their labors: both are older, and as he reads the paper, she knits and watches television. Suddenly we see him imagine she is sitting in the chair with only her negligee on, but when he reaches out to touch her, his vision vanishes, and she returns to her old self. The pendulum swings.

5. Later the two are playing cards. Both have aged, but the old man still imagines a younger version of his wife. When he reaches out to realize his vision, however, she returns to the old woman she has become. The pendulum swings.

6. Again he is at the table, but now he is much older, even stooped. His wife is gone. As he smokes his pipe, he imagines that his wife is still with him, an old woman seated in the chair. But when he reaches out, she vanishes. He looks down at his empty hands, and the pendulum swings.

7. Finally, only the pipe he has been smoking is left on the table. The smoke rises into the air and forms a heartlike shape. Within this form is an image of the young couple, embracing each other. Then this vision vanishes, too.

* * * * * * * *

Film Study Notes

ANIMATION

This simple but effective film presents its story in an animated form, using line drawings of characters and surroundings in each scene.

Film Study Notes: The Blessings of Love (2)

The animation does not attempt to recreate life-like movements; actually, the film has more of the look of a cartoon. The disappearance and reappearance of lines at different times in the film suggests some of the evanescent qualities of life that are pertinent to the overall theme.

STRUCTURE

An obvious structural element in the film is the use of the swinging pendulum that separates scenes. This repeated image suggests the relentless and unyielding force of time that is always at work in our lives. Each time it appears, its movement is accompanied by a loud clinking sound, not unlike the harsh ticking of a clock. More than anything, the pendulum interrupts life. Each time it appears a time in one's life has ended, and the film invites us to consider what we will do next, when we are older.

Another aspect of the structure of this film concerns the character's story. At first he is concerned with what lies ahead: as a young boy he wants to be a young man; as a young man he wants to be a debonair suitor; when he finds a young woman, he thinks of being in bed with her. When he has achieved his last dream, however, and is shown in his wedding bed, his imaginings turn from a concern with the future to an obsession with the past: when in bed with his wife he thinks of being with the young single men again; when at home in a quaint domestic scene, he imagines his wife in a sexy outfit; when an old man, playing cards with his wife, he imagines his wife a younger woman; when he is alone at the end, he imagines his wife, an old woman too, still with him. Whether he looks ahead or behind, it is clear he loses what he has in the present. Eventually, he loses what he had in the past; thus, the last scene is tragic in nature.

* * * * * * * *

Questions for Discussion

I. The Man Who Wanted Something Else.

1. What do you think the main character wants throughout the film?

2. When the man is in bed with his wife, why does he imagine being with his old friends in the cafe?

3. What do you think is the significance of the last scene (section 7)?

II. The Study of Aging.

4. Why would this be a good film to begin with if one were studying aging?

5. What statement does this film make about aging? How did this film make you feel about your own aging?

6. Does the film make you think of people you know or have known in your life? How are they like the main character in the film?

Questions for Discussion: The Blessings of Love (2)

III. General Questions

7. What do you think is meant by the title of this film, The Blessings of Love?

8. What statement does this film make about the difference between fantasies and reality? Does it offer any suggestions as to how we can live our lives?

9. What does the film say about our relationship to time?

10. What do you think is the significance of the swinging pendulum that separates each of the scenes?

The Detour

Summary of Sequences

1. We see a dark screen and hear a voice: "Miss Hamilton? Katherine, can you hear me?" Then we hear voices and sounds that originate from inside a hospital. A woman's voice, groaning, "No! No!" Suddenly we see a doctor leaning over us, looking right into the camera (SEE: first person camera in Film Study Notes). As he looks at Katherine, we hear her thoughts: "I wonder why they try so hard. Am I really worth the effort? See how they smile in delight that they brought me back."

2. She writes her dinner order out on a blackboard because she cannot speak. "I wish there was enough room on this blackboard to tell them what I really think of their hospital," she thinks. The next intruder is another doctor, who insists on peering right into her mouth. "Who is this creature?" She chases him out by breathing hard into his face. As he leaves, she thinks, "If you insist on keeping me alive, I will tolerate only handsome men in this room."

   In comes the orderly with her dinner. The eggs are nearly burned. She flings them against the wall. "To the victor belong the spoils. Et tu, Brute?"

3. While an orderly is shown cleaning the wall, in comes a nurse. She confides, "I hear you've been throwing eggs around today. Listen, I don't blame you." Another doctor, a young one, comes in at this moment. He and the nurse enjoy a tete-a-tete at the foot of Katherine's bed, and Katherine laughs at this moment of "privacy." When the nurse leaves, Dr. Kramer sits on the edge of Katherine's bed and examines her. He reminds her of someone. "He reminds me of that summer in Italy . . . Carlo." The screen goes out of focus as Katherine remembers the past. We hear a man's voice: "Katherine, will you come back and see me?" Then a young woman, telling Carlo that she is afraid. "What should we do?" she asks. "We will make love until then and not think about it."

4. The screen returns to focus, and we see a middle-aged chaplain leaning over us (Katherine), speaking in platitudes about her recovery. As he rambles on, suddenly Katherine turns her head away from him, and he follows her gaze. Then she turns her head back again to get away from him. She returns to the past. "I loved your hair. I loved the way you touched me. I never felt ashamed."

   The screen returns to focus on the clergyman again. He asks her if he can do something for her. To his delight, she writes on the blackboard, "Carlo Anton, Milan, Italy." He asks her to write the reason for wanting to see him. She writes on the other side of the blackboard: "Copulation." When she hands it to him, he erases that word as soon as he sees it and leaves the room. As he walks out, she thinks, "Have pity on an old lady, dear sir. Bring him back to me. Tell him I'll be waiting here."

5. The next scene begins with a new orderly who comes in and treats her harshly. He shoves the bedpan toward her and sneers, "Just do your duty like a good little girl," and then bringing his face right up to hers whispers, "And I'll give you a great big kiss." We see her hand reach out

Summary of Sequences: The Detour (2)

as she slaps him. He leaps back and snaps, "You ugly puss." She begins throwing things at him as he mocks her. The nurse comes in and ushers him out, then tries to comfort Katherine, who is distraught. But the screen suddenly turns green, and ghostly images seem to float upward. Meanwhile, we hear background noises of hospital staff reacting to the emergency.

After a few seconds an image returns to the screen. We see the young Dr. Kramer, leaning over us (Katherine). He looks up and says, "We have a rhythm." We hear Katherine's voice as she screams, "No!" The screen goes white momentarily.

6. Then we return to the hospital scene, but this time we look down on Dr. Kramer, who is standing next to Katherine's bed. For the first time we see Katherine, the white hospital sheet up to her neck. The camera then moves in toward the bed, but at the foot of the bed it veers off to the side and moves to a close-up (Katherine?) standing next to a lake (Milan, Italy?). We hear a gentle laugh from Katherine.

7. As the credits go up, we see various old photographs of Katherine as a young woman, often with other young people. We might guess that many of these pictures show scenes in Italy.

* * * * * * * *

Film Study Notes

FIRST PERSON CAMERA

The most unusual technical feature of this film is the use of a first person camera. That is, instead of allowing the viewers to see the character in action, our point of view becomes the point of view of the character. The camera thus becomes the main character's eyes, and all other characters who look at the main character necessarily look right into the camera.

We first notice this in section one, when the doctor looks directly into the camera (thus, looks at Katherine). But section 4 provides an example which helps us see the real strength of the technique. There the chaplain, obviously sincere but boring, speaks the same kind words to her that he uses for all patients. But Katherine doesn't want to hear about her "recovery." Thus, when the camera moves away from the chaplain on two occasions, the viewer realizes that this movement represents Katherine's head, turning from one side of the pillow to the other, as she tries to make the chaplain go away.

The first person camera is also evident when the screen goes out of focus in section 3 and later in section 5. We are again seeing what Katherine is seeing, and when the screen goes white at the end of section 5, the director may be suggesting the moment of death--a strong white light.

Section 6 contains a more puzzling example of the use of first person camera. We look down on the scene in the hospital room, but we experience the sway of the camera, back and forth, as if it were floating in mid-air. For the first time, we actually see Katherine, lying dead in the hospital bed. However, because of the camera's unsteadiness, and because it then moves closer to the bed until it focuses on a close-up of the old photograph,

Film Study Notes: The Detour (2)

we may suspect that our point of view is still Katherine's point of view. This feeling is reinforced when we hear Katherine's gentle laughter at the end of section 6. Of course, if Katherine is dead, whose point of view are we experiencing here?

* * * * * * * *

Questions for Discussion

I. The Viewer's Identification with Katherine.

1. What effect did the use of the first person camera (see Film Study Notes) have on your viewing of the film? Did it help you understand Katherine's thoughts and feelings?

2. Did you ever feel that you were the patient? How did that make you feel?

II. The "Detour."

3. What was the "detour"?

4. What was on the mind of most of the members of the hospital staff who visited Katherine? How did that affect our attitude toward them?

5. Although Katherine was visited by many hospital staff members, why was she not comforted by their visits?

III. The Importance of the Past.

6. Who was Carlo? Why do you think Katherine spent so much time thinking about him?

7. How are the series of old photographs shown at the end of the film a part of Katherine's story?

IV. General Questions.

8. What was your impression of section 6? What do you think this scene attempted to represent? Why did we hear a gentle laugh from Katherine just as the camera showed a close-up of the old photograph on her bedstand?

9. What statement does the film make about the importance of communication between health care staff and their patients?

Last Stand Farmer

Summary of Sequences

1. We see an old photograph of two young boys, and as Kenneth O'Donnell's voice begins, the camera moves in to focus on one of the two boys, the narrator as a youth. We hear him recall a time he fell through the ice as a child: "I slipped and went down into the hole. I had long hair clean to my shoulders. My brother pulled me out of the water by the hair. If it hadn't been for that, I'd gone under the ice, and my troubles would've been over for sure."

2. We see the old man's hands working the gears of his horse-drawn plow, then see him dressed in a white t-shirt, wearing suspenders, plowing on a spring day. As he plows, we hear his voice: "You'll find rocks everywhere you go in Vermont. And then they tell the story according to the Bible, he without sin throw the first rock. Well, Vermonters must be damned sinful, because they never pick no rocks."

3. Later, we see him standing outside, as he reminisces about his youth: (Direct quote) "I always wanted to do something I wasn't supposed to do." He tells the story of an old plow his brother broke while plowing. That night, Kenneth snuck out to the barn, pulled out the new Yankee plow, and hitched it up. Then he plowed the field alone. His father never said a word.

4. We see him drive an old beat-up truck up to a barn so he can put up some hay. He gets out of the truck, climbs up on the hood, and onto the top of the cab. He is dressed in a blue shirt, wearing suspenders, and an old gray cap perched on his head. As he pitches the hay into the barn, he recalls his father's words: "Use everybody like you'd like to have them use you, and then you'll get along in this world."

5. Standing with his horses in the field, he speaks fondly of them. He lifts one of the horse's front legs to show how gentle they are, then rubs and pats the horse's stomach. "They're good old fellas," he says. He goes on to talk about his relationship to mechanization. "I own a tractor. Bought a tractor eight years ago and never drove it. I still like my horses. To hell with the tractor." He laughs.

   After a scene showing him mowing oats, he again stands out in the field, talking about his past: "We lived through the Depression, and just got going pretty good in the 40's and then Uncle Sam comes along and says I want you, so I went into the service and after four years came back here, and I've been here ever since." He also complains about the high taxes small farmers have to pay.

6. Scenes follow showing Kenneth and his wife, a large woman, harvesting the squash and gourds in their garden. We also see them eating quietly in the kitchen, with bright blue walls and sparse furnishings.

7. After a scene showing Kenneth feeding his pigs, we see a group of men gathered by the pig pen on butchering day. This scene graphically depicts one of the men first shooting the pig, then sticking it with a large knife.

Summary of Sequences: Last Stand Farmer (2)

The pigs' convulsions after being shot are not pleasant to watch.

As the pigs are boiled ("the first bath they ever had"), we hear Ken reflecting on the past: "Everybody seemed to be happy. The world wasn't so fast as it is now."

Later, sitting outside on a hay rake, he talks directly about high taxes: "There ain't no damn need for it." He sees small farmers being forced to sell out.

8. Inside their house, we see Mrs. O'Donnell watching television. Sitting in the corner, Kenneth seems oblivious to the T.V. program. We hear him say, "Sometimes I get to dreaming I'm driving a big truck, loaded, and it's going down this big steep hill, and the lights go out, and I'm putting the brakes on, and I don't know whether I'm pulling the sheets or what off the bed. But just before I get ready to crash, I wake up."

9. A winter scene. Kenneth is outside, letting his horses into the barn for the evening. As he walks in the snowy lane, we hear his voice: "It's a hard thing to see anybody who works hard all their life to have a little something and then see them lose it. You don't have to slip but just once, and you'll lose the whole thing."

Inside the barn, as the credits begin to go up. We see him bedding his horses down. He works slowly, methodically, as he has done for years we imagine, and he stops to pat one of the horses: "He doesn't look so good this winter as he did last."

* * * * * * * *

Film Study Notes

DOCUMENTARY STYLE

The director creates a varied and fluid style by combining scenes showing Kenneth O'Donnell going about his daily activities with Mr. O'Donnell's comments about aspects of his life that are pertinent to those scenes. In many of these scenes (sections 1, 2, and 4, for example), Mr. O'Donnell is not talking to us directly. Instead, his recorded comments are played while the images are shown. In this way the viewer listens to what seem to be his thoughts. For example, in section 8 we see him sitting in the house, watching television, but we hear him talk about a recurring dream that has been troubling him. His words strike us as the thoughts of a man who has a lot on his mind. Such examples in the Summary of Sequences will be noted with the preface "We hear him say."

Of course, at other times (scenes 2, 5, and 7, for example), Mr. O'Donnell speaks directly to the viewer, recalling past experiences or current concerns.

STRUCTURE

A structural element that adds to the meaning of the film is the director's use of the changing seasons as the fundamental unit of the film's composition. The film begins in the spring, follows Mr. O'Donnell through

Film Study Notes: Last Stand Farmer (2)

the summer into the harvest season, and ends with a scene in the depth of winter, with Mr. O'Donnell caring for his horses in the barn.

* * * * * * * *

Questions for Discussion

I. One Man's Values.

1. What do you see as Mr. O'Donnell's philosophy of life? What are some of the sources for that philosophy?

2. Three important things in Mr. O'Donnell's life are (a) working, (b) his horses, and (c) his farm. Why does each matter so much to him?

3. How does his attitude toward his father help us understand his values?

4. When you realize that this is a man who shuns the use of heavy machinery and other examples of mechanization, how do you feel about him? Do you think he is foolish for using a horse-drawn plow instead of plowing with his tractor?

5. Is Mr. O'Donnell a folk hero, leading us in a struggle against the forces of mechanization and industrialization that are dominant in our society?

II. General Questions.

6. When you first see Mrs. O'Donnell, is your attitude toward Mr. O'Donnell affected in any way?

7. What is it about the past that Kenneth O'Donnell sees is a positive force, which no longer exists in this modern world?

8. What effect does the director's use of the changing seasons have on the viewer's response to the film?

9. What do you think is the significance of Mr. O'Donnell's dream (section 8)?

10. Do you think the purpose of this film is to stimulate the discussion of public policy issues, such as land use taxation?

11. What do you think the title, Last Stand Farmer, refers to?

Mailbox

Summary of Sequences

1. An old woman and a young girl are looking at pictures in an old photograph album. "You look so young," the little girl says. "Well, I wasn't always eighty-three," the old woman answers.

   Then we see the older woman, Lethe, and her young friend as they set out to see if any mail has come. The two walk down a long country lane, lined with tall trees.

   At the mailbox, Lethe finds it empty. After the little girl returns to her home nearby, we see the postman drive up. Lethe exchanges a warm welcome with him, and they laugh and kid with each other. But the mailman has only a utility bill for her. "Better than nothing," she says.

2. At night inside Lethe's house, we see her finishing a letter to one of her children. That completed, she sits at the table, lost in thought.

   The next day we see Lethe at her mailbox again, and a neighbor woman and her daughter (the same little girl as above) stop to talk to her. Lethe tells her of her concern when she doesn't hear from her children.

   At night inside her house, Lethe is shown admiring some of her needlepoint, a lovely pillow covering with the work LOVE stitched in big letters. She sits quietly, and we see a close-up of her rocker, then the camera goes back to hold on the woman, sitting alone in her house.

3. Cookie day at Lethe's. She and the neighbor girl talk about family. Lethe says, "Family can be so lovely even if they are a bother sometimes." She tells the little girl why she stays in this remote house rather than moving into the city. "I get a little lonesome for my children and grandchildren sometimes, but I'm fine."

   We see Lethe sitting on the edge of her bed at night, talking with one of her daughters on the telephone. But her daughter does not seem interested in talking, and the call is disrupted by her complaints about the children, her husband's irritation with the expense of the call, and loud music in the background. Lethe gets no satisfaction from the call.

4. Lethe's neighbor, the woman we saw in section 2, receives a call from Lethe's other daughter, who tells her that the family has decided a nursing home is the best thing for Lethe: "She'll have her own room, constant care, three good meals, and have people her own age to visit with." The neighbor's reaction: "It'll break her heart." The daughter adds that the family will write Lethe to tell her all the information.

   Lethe in her house, alone again. She sits looking at pictures of her husband. "If you hadn't gone and left me a young widow, I wouldn't have to tramp out to that mailbox." She holds his picture up: "Oh, I'm so lonely," she cries.

5. After a scene showing Lethe and her neighbor return from shopping, we see Lethe walk down to the mailbox again. When she finds nothing inside, she smacks the box with her cane. But the mailman drives up at that moment and tells her that even if he did have something for her, he wouldn't be able to read her name on the box, since the writing is so faded.

   We see a close-up of a small brush, as Lethe carefully paints her name

Summary of Sequences: Mailbox (2)

in big black letters on her mailbox. Later, the mailman drives up and laughs at her sense of humor. "What a lady." But he has no mail for her.

Lethe and the neighbor girl at Lethe's house. She shows the girl old pictures drawn by her grandchildren when they were small. "I guess they don't have time to write anymore," she says. She then suggests the little girl draw something and send it to her grandmother.

6. Lethe's mailman at her box, as he looks through the day's mail. When he spots a letter for Lethe, he says, "It's about time," and throws it in the box.

We see Lethe wake up from a nap in her chair. Realizing she is late for the mail, she gets up hurriedly and sets out for the mailbox. When Lethe sees the letter, she rushes back to the house. Inside, she throws off her clothes and grabs the letter opener. But just as she begins to open the letter, she has a heart attack, and slumps down in her chair.

Outside, we see the neighbor girl trying to get Lethe's attention. She has come to play, and when Lethe doesn't answer, the girl runs home.

7. After a scene in which we see the neighbor woman comforting Lethe before the ambulance comes, we see the neighbor in her house, talking on the phone to one of Lethe's daughters. The neighbor has been crying, and when the daughter asks if Lethe had any last words, she speaks through her tears: "She said to tell them I was so happy to get their letter." We hear of sound of shock on the other end of the line.

8. After several seconds of black-out, we see the actress who played Lethe, sitting in a director's chair in front of her make-up mirror. She asks, "Have you written your parents lately, or your grandparents?" She leans over the edge of the chair, and in a commanding voice says, "Well, you'd better!"

* * * * * * * *

Film Study Notes

EDITING

As in the film Peege, the director here helps us identify with the old woman, Lethe, by carefully selecting and juxtaposing shots. For example, in section 2 Lethe works on some needlepoint for her children. We see a woman who thrives on giving love, but after she admires her work we see her sitting quiet and alone in her room. To add to the sense of isolation and aloneness, the director cuts to a close-up of her rocker, then pulls back the camera to show her being swallowed up by the emptiness of the room.

A similar effect is gained in section 4, when the director shows Lethe in a lonely moment, looking over the many old photographs of her husband. As we view a close-up of a picture of her husband, obviously a man of charm and vitality, we can better understand and loneliness of a woman who was left a young widow by his untimely death.

Film Study Notes: Mailbox (2)

MUSIC

The music used in this film also helps us identify with Lethe and sympathize with her plight. The words of the song imply that a letter is a visible sign of one's love for another person, and the haunting melody underscores the emotional loss Lethe suffers when she is deprived of that symbol of love.

ORGANIZATION OF FILM

The passage of time in the film is linked to the changing of the seasons--from fall to winter. The movement into winter emphasizes the difficulty of Lethe's isolation, living in a rural area. The winter season is also an appropriate setting for the outcome of the action--Lethe's untimely death.

The last scene in the film should be considered as optional. That is, the use of the film does not demand that the last scene, showing the actress who played Lethe talking directly to the viewer, be included in the presentation of the film. Of course, before deciding whether to include that scene or not, the user of the film should consider the intended impact of the two endings.

* * * * * * * *

Questions for Discusion

I. The Viewer's Relationship to Lethe.

1. What was your attitude toward Lethe as you watched the film? Why do you think you felt that way?

2. How did the rural setting of the film help us identify with Lethe's situation?

3. From Lethe's point of view, what are some of the important things in life? How are her values reflected in some of her actions?

4. Why is receiving a letter so important to Lethe? Why aren't phone calls as satisfying as receiving a letter?

5. What did you see as the role of the mailman? How did he influence our attitude toward Lethe?

II. The Role of Family.

6. What attitudes and values do the film attempt to foster concerning family relationships?

7. In what ways were the neighbor woman, her daughter, and even the mailman a substitute family?

Questions for Discussion: Mailbox (2)

8. Why do you think Lethe's daughter called Lethe's neighbor to tell her that the family planned to put Lethe in a nursing home? Why didn't she call her mother and tell her?

9. Did viewing this film cause you to think of members of your own family? What are some of the feelings it evoked?

III. General Questions.

10. Is the film in any way a portrayal of the plight of the rural elderly?

11. When Lethe's neighbor tells Myra (Lethe's daughter) that Lethe's last words were, "Tell them I was so happy to get their letter," Myra's reaction is one of shock. Why was that the case?

12. What do you think the film tries to say about the significance of grandparent-grandchildren relationships?

13. How did the last scene in the film (where the actress who played Lethe speaks directly to the viewer) affect you? Is this last scene essential to the overall structure and message of the film?

Martin the Cobbler

Summary of Sequences

1. The story unfolds on a small Russian town in winter. A festival is in progress outside of town. We see Martin through the basement window of his shop. He sees a friend, Vladimir, walk by on the sidewalk. Vladimir enters to ask Martin if he would like to help gather wood for the festival and join in the dancing. But Martin declines gruffly. He tells Vladimir, "Life has been good for you. For me, it's not been so good. I'm like this old shoe you see here, stitched and restitched, soled and resoled. Now there's very few miles left." Vladimir sighs and leaves him alone. "Shut the door!" Martin yells.

2. Alone in the shop, Martin works on, while the narrator speaks: "Poor Martin, it seemed to him there was nothing to live for." She tells us that as a young man he lived for his family, but his wife died when a young woman, and just when his one son was about to begin to work with Martin, he died too. "Martin gave way to despair, and in his soul he blamed the Lord." Because it is late, Martin lights a candle and goes to a table in his shop, where he begins to drink. After he chases a small mouse back into its hole, we see the mouse peer up at the old man at the table from inside its mousehole. Martin's head slumps to his arms on the table.

3. The next day, Martin works on his shoes. A holy man visits him and requests that Martin repair the binding on an "ancient book of the Lord." Martin protests that he is the wrong man for the task, because "I am without hope. All I ask of God is that I may soon die." The holy man tries to rouse him from his despair, encouraging him to work for the Lord, who gives him life. He leaves, adding, "Read the book," and promises to return in a week.

4. Later we see Martin at work again on his shoes, with the holy book in the center of the frame. It is late, and Martin begins to clean up. Suddenly, he sees the same little mouse on the table, in fact, on the holy book itself. He yells at the little creature, and as it tries to scurry away, it flips several pages of the book. Then it escapes. Martin goes over to the table, sits down, and seems drawn to the book. He reads the story of a rich merchant who invited the Lord to be his guest and then neglected to show the Lord any signs of welcome. Martin reacts earnestly: "Oh, that merchant. What kind of man was he? Like me? He only thought of himself. But who was his guest? The Lord himself. If the Lord were my guest, I would give him all the signs of welcome." He falls asleep over the book.

   Suddenly a voice calls to him, saying, "Martin?" Martin's unconscious seems to respond to this mysterious voice, which tells him, "Look for me out on the street tomorrow, for I shall come." Martin shakes himself awake and then goes to bed.

5. The next day light breaks over the houses of the city and the camera turns to Martin, busily working on his shoes. The fast-paced, light music is as energetic as his activity. Martin's eye is cocked toward the window that looks out on the street. When he hears a whooshing sound outside, he perks up, but then sees it is only the streetcleaner outside. But when the old man outside begins to sneeze, Martin gets up to look and then invites the

Summary of Sequences: Martin the Cobbler (2)

man inside. The two sit at the table, and while the man drinks hot tea, Martin's attention is focused on the window again. The old man notices Martin and asks, "Are you expecting someone?" Martin laughs and shares his secret with the old man. They laugh together, and then the old man leaves, after saying, "Thank you, Martin. You've given me food for body and soul."

6. Back to work, still watching the window, Martin hears a baby cry outside and goes to the window again. He sees a poorly-dressed woman and her child and invites them in. "Don't bother with the snow," he says, "I'll wipe it up later." She tells him she can't afford more clothes. He turns to the coat rack and begins to take down a lovely shawl, obviously his late wife's, and after thinking it over to himself, he offers it to the woman, who is so excited she kisses him. "The Lord bless you. Surely he must have sent you to your window." Martin has to admit, "Yes, it was no mere chance that made me look out my window today." After she leaves, we see the little mouse again, but this time Martin calls it his little friend and gives it some crumbs.

7. Later that day, Martin's mood has darkened. He goes to the window, but sees no one. Suddenly, he does see an old woman on the sidewalk, and at that moment a young boy who rushes up to her and steals an apple from her bag. Disgusted, Martin runs outside to help the old woman. But when she tells Martin the boy should be whipped to an inch of his life, Martin replies, "If he should be whipped for an apple, then what should be done with us?" Martin settles the dispute and makes the boy apologize. As the old woman leaves, the boy offers to help carry her bag, since he is going in the same direction. They walk off. Chilled, Martin returns to the shop.

8. He works for awhile, but when the lamps are lit outside, he becomes depressed. He sees the mouse in the corner, and he speaks kindly to it again. The mouse seems to sympathize with the old man. Martin goes to the table and begins to read the holy book. As soon as he sits down a mysterious voice calls to him: "Martin? Do you not know me?" Martin cries, "Who is it?" He turns around to see the Lord, and we see from his point of view a miraculous vision--out of a fluid circle of light we see formed an image of each of the people he helped that day. One at a time they appear: the old streetcleaner, the young woman and child, and the granny and the boy. Each speaks, "It is I" in their turn. The vision ends, and Martin turns around to look at the holy book. He reads aloud, "Whatever you do to one of these, no matter how small they be, whatever you do to your brother and sister, remember you do unto me." He looks up, fulfilled.

9. Suddenly he sees Vladimir walk by the window, and he calls out for him. He looks for his hat, and when he can't find it, we see the little mouse run under it and pull it along the floor to him. He thanks the little creature for its help and runs after Vladimir. When Martin tells him he wants to go along to the festival, Vladimir says, "What took you so long?" Martin says, "We'll show the young people some of the old dances." They both howl like old wolves and walk off together.

* * * * * * * *

Film Study Notes: Martin the Cobbler

ANIMATION

Although this is an animated film, using clay figures to represent people and animals, the process of 3-Dimation easily overcomes the viewer's reluctance to accept the characters as anything more than inanimate objects put in motion through the magic of film. Rather, in a short time the viewers begin to identify with the characters just as they do with actors and actresses.

How is this done? a) close-ups: in the first conversation between Vladimir and Martin, the director uses close-ups of Martin to help us identify with his wretched and lonely existence. Later, when Martin hears the mysterious voice, we again see his face in a close-up. More than any other use of the camera, this technique allows the viewer to sympathize and identify with the emotions of a character. b) editing: this film is edited in the same way that sophisticated films like Peege are edited; that is, we see reaction shots of characters, we see shots that show the point of view of characters (including the little mouse), and we see time condensed in the movement between scenes.

MUSIC

In this film music serves as a thematic force, helping the viewers identify the specific emotions they are to feel in a scene, and even changing the entire mood of the film when appropriate. For example, early in the film the dark, somber music underscores the morbid loneliness Martin is suffering from; later in the film (section 5), fast-paced, energetic music signals a change in Martin's mood and a movement in the film away from gloom and toward hope.

* * * * * * * *

Questions for Discussion

I. Martin and his Despair.

1. What was the nature of Martin's despair? Why does he see his situation as hopeless?

2. Why does he refuse his friend Vladimir's offer to gather firewood and go dancing at the festival?

3. Why does he refuse to help the holy man at first?

II. To Live for God.

4. In the context of the film, what does it mean to "live for God"?

5. The name of the short story this film is based upon was Where Love is God is. Why would that also be an appropriate title for this film?

Questions for Discussion: Martin the Cobbler (2)

6. How does the little mouse play a central role in our understanding of Martin's attitude and of the film's central message?

7. What do we learn about Christianity as a result of watching this film?

8. What do we learn about aging as a result of this film?

Nell and Fred

Summary of Sequences

1. We begin with a close-up of Nell, a heavy-set woman, sitting in a chair in her living room. She reads a poem:

> There's nothing the matter with me.
> I'm just as happy as I can be.
> My pulse is weak and my blood is thin,
> But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.
> With my ears in the drawer and my teeth in the cup,
> And my eyes on the table until I get up.
> As sleep dims my eyes, I say to myself,
> "Is there anything else I should put on myself?"
> And I'm happy to say, as I close tight my drawer,
> My friends are the same, perhaps even more.

She enjoys a good laugh over this poem.

2. A narrator notes that Nell, 81 years old, has been a widow for seven years, and Fred has boarded at this house since he retired. He is now 90. While the film was being made, a senior citizens home was being constructed outside Montreal, and Nell and Fred are considering moving to the home. The narrator then lets Nell and Fred tell their own story.

3. Fred, a lean and ascetic-looking man, is ready to visit the social service agency, where he can learn information on the new facility. He moves about inside the house, preparing for the visit. Because he is hard of hearing, Nell has to yell at him to get his attention.

After he leaves, she claims that she is ready to move into the home. She doesn't even need to see it first. When the filmmaker asks her what she can take with her from her home, she mentions her canary and a grandfather's clock. "There's just one or two things that tug at your heart, you know."

4. Fred returns home and see a delightful example of the way they interact. Nell yells for him to bring a chair and sit down next to her, so she can ask him what he thought of the home. But when Fred sits down, he complains that he didn't see the home at all. Instead, they wanted him to sign up right away. "I've changed my mind," he declares. She interprets that to mean he refused to sign up because he didn't want Nell to be left alone in the house. (Her physical problems make it difficult for her to take care of herself, and she can only walk with a care.) But Fred denies he refused to sign up just to protect her. When she perserveres, he loses his temper and stalks off, muttering, "Oh, I never know what I'm doing right."

But this seeming conflict is dispelled in the next scene, when we see the two work together to change the paper in the canary cage. All arguing ceases. Fred helps Nell, not complaining about the task, and we realize how much the little bird means to Nell.

5. An older woman visits Nell. While Fred sits patiently in the background, the older woman answers questions addressed to her by the filmmaker, who is offscreen. She is excited about living in the home: "I certainly hope and pray that I do get in. It's the only place for people like us. We're free to do what we please."

Later, Nell talks on the phone with a representative from the facility,

and while she discusses the possible assignment of rooms, her friend (noted above) stands behind her, rubbing her back tenderly.

6. Two social workers visit Nell in order to fill out Nell's application for the home. One is of British extraction, and the other has a thick French accent. Although Nell has dealt only with the former, the woman leaves her alone with the madame because the interviews with potential residents are not part of her job. But Nell seems to accept this technicality and warms to the interview with the French-Canadian social worker. "I'm a bloke," she says, and later adds, "I like playing cards. I'm a card shark." However, when the social worker notes a disparity between stated income and actual income, based on Nell's ommission of a small pension from the report, the social worker presses Nell to change her mind. All sources of income must be declared on the application. Nell listens patiently to the woman's arguments, but concludes, "When you do these things you don't question people."

7. After a scene at the hairdresser's, where Nell shares her ambivalent feelings concerning her move to the new facility, we see Nell and Fred at the senior citizens home. They are part of an audience of older people, listening to the director of the facility. He explains in detail how room selections are made, and notes that although it is impossible to give everyone their first choice, everything will be done to make appropriate assignments. He adds,"The only thing we ask is that people smile."

On a tour of the building, the director shows one of the rooms to a group of about twelve people. In the hallway, he asks them to look out the windows to the river: "You can see the boats, you can see the children playing, and you'll have a nice time,"

In a brief scene, we see Nell, seated in the hallway, asking the director what she can bring along when she comes. She mentions some of her furniture and also her canary. He answers, "You can have your bird."

Alone in one of the rooms, Nell and Fred look over the various furnishings. Apparently this will be Fred's room. Both appear uncomfortable, almost bewildered by the unfamiliar environment.

8. We see Nell sitting in a lawn chair outside her house. She explains why she has decided not to move to the facility: "How in the world am I going to spend the rest of my life in this tiny room?"

Back at the senior citizens home, we see Fred making up his bed in his room. Then he talks directly to the filmmaker about his financial difficulties, based on the size of his pension, the cost of the room rent, and the $26 he has left to see him through a month. "I can't manage on it."

Fred strides up to Nell's house, carrying his two bags. Inside, Nell helps him unpack. He is angry about the bad experience. One reason: "I didn't like their regimentation." Another reason: "I like my own cooking." Nell teases him about this, but Fred is in no mood for humor. Finally, he adds another reason: "It's all right for people who've got money to carry on with."

In a brief concluding scene, we see the two seated at the kitchen table, drinking some tea.

* * * * * * * *

Film Study Notes: Nell and Fred

BACKGROUND OF THE FILMING

The filmmaker is Nell's grandson, and although we do not see him on the screen during any of the scenes, we do hear him ask some questions of Nell and Fred. Both of the older people show us that they are comfortable with the young man's presence. He does not intrude upon their lives; he helps them reveal their stories.

STRUCTURE

Although this film is non-fiction, the filmmaker creates a vivid, interesting portrayal of the two older people by using a structure common to fictional representations. Nell and Fred's life--or that part of their life that is related to their consideration of living in the senior citizens home--becomes a story. As a story, it includes exposition, characterization, conflict, climax, and resolution. The question of plot is simply the question, "Will Nell and Fred move into the new facility?" As the film moves to its climax (section 7), the actual visit to the home, we come to know Nell and Fred and care about them. We see Fred's frustration with the bureaucracy and learn of Nell's ambivalent feelings. At the end of section 7, however, the filmmaker renders the climax anti-climactic, as Nell and Fred stand bewildered in the empty room. This, then is the reality of living in the new facility. The resolution of their story follows swiftly: both Nell and Fred reject the new home, for different reasons, and Fred returns to Nell's house. As in the case of a story, the characters have faced a problem, revealing something of themselves in the course of their struggle, and have experienced a resolution of that problem. In the end they know more about themselves than they knew in the beginning.

* * * * * * * *

Questions for Discussion

I. Nell's Values.

1. How does the opening scene, where Nell reads a poem about old age, set the stage for this film? What do you think this scene reveals about Nell?

2. What do you think Nell means when she says, "There's just one or two things that tug at the heart, you know?" (section 3)

3. Why is Nell's canary so important to her? When the director of the new facility says, "You can have your bird," how did you feel?

4. When Nell is interviewed by the French-Canadian social worker, she admits she also gets income from a small pension. The social worker suggests that Nell spend that money while alive, rather than trying to save it for the future. Nell says, "When you do these things you don't question people." What do you think she is really saying here?

II. Nell and Fred.

5. Based on their interaction, how would you characterize Nell and Fred's relationship? When you learn they are not married, does that fact alter your attitude toward them?

6. How did Nell try to "handle" Fred throughout the film? Was her strategy usually effective?

7. In what ways does the film avoid reinforcing stereotypical attitudes toward older people?

III. The Senior Citizens Home.

8. At first (section 3) Nell says she is ready to move to the new facility without even seeing it. Later, even after she has visited the home, she decides not to move in. What do you think changed her mind?

9. Why did the older woman, Nell's friend, say that the senior citizens home is "the only place for people like us"? How do you react to her statement?

10. The viewer experiences two tours of a typical room at the senior citizens home. In the first, the director shows several people in a room; in the second we see Nell and Fred alone in a similar room. What do you think the filmmaker intended in filming these two scenes in this order? How did you react to both scenes?

11. What statement does the film make about the need for institutions to to address social and psychological needs of older people as well as their physical needs?

12. Fred gives Nell three reasons why he left the home. Do you think there are any other reasons he didn't mention?

13. Why did Nell decide not to move into the home?

IV. General Questions.

14. Why do you think Nell's grandson wanted to make this film?

15. Why did the filmmaker end the film with a scene of the two sitting at the kitchen table, drinking tea?

16. What scene in the film had the greatest impact on you?

17. What statement does the film make on the way we treat older people in our society? (consider especially sections 6 and 7)

One-Eyed Men Are Kings

Summary of Sequences

1. We begin with several establishing shots of Paris, then focus on one street, where a little man in a black coat and hat walks sadly down the sidewalk. When he reaches his apartment, he greets the cleaning lady at the foot of the stairs, but before he can escape her, she makes him wipe his feet on the mat.

2. Upstairs, he opens the entry door, and we see an old woman (his mother), hand feeding a little dog, who wears a napkin. The dog snaps at our little man, and he closes the door. In the entry he smokes a cigarette, and jumps when he hears his mother call him. Inside, he sits to eat, but she holds out the leash--it's time to walk the dog. The little dog, however, wants nothing to do with him and snaps at him several times.

3. Downstairs, the cleaning lady fondly pets the dog and then the two set off. The walk is a near disaster for our little man. Because of the dog's restlessness and stubbornness, the two are almost run down by a motorist. Then the dog piddles on the wheel of a parked car, and when the motorist arrives and notices this, our man humbly bends to wipe off the wheel with his handkerchief. After a brief stop in a public park, the dog pulls him around a corner, where he collides with a young woman. Again he is yelled at for his carelessness. They come upon a quiet park, but when they approach the gate, a gendarme waves them away, pointing to the sign that says no one with a dog is allowed inside. On the way home, the little dog entwines its leash around that of a blind man's guide dog, and several people have to intervene to untangle the confusion. Exasperated, the man returns home.

4. But when he begins his meal, engaging in a little staring match with the dog on the side, he is interrupted again by his mother's insistent plea to take the dog for another walk. This time, however, he has an idea. In the entryway, he puts on dark glasses--voila! Now he is a king!

   Every scene in section three is repeated, but in every case, he is treated with respect and consideration. When a driver has to stop her car as they cross an intersection, she reacts with fear; when the little dog piddles on a car's tire, the owner stands by--helpless; when the two bump into a woman on the sidewalk, a man comes along to upbraid her for being careless; when the two approach the quiet park, the gendarme sweeps open the gate and welcomes them. Inside the park our "blind" man and his dog join a few men on park benches for pleasant conversation.

5. Back home, the little dog no longer snaps at the man; now it waits patiently to be taken on another walk--to that quiet little park where people lavish attention on it. The next time they visit the park they are surrounded by more people, and soon even children become part of the scene.

6. Now when the little man is at home, he is impatient to return to the park, and he dashes off with the dog at the first opportunity--much to his mother's astonishment. At the park, the little man again enjoys himself,

Summary of Sequences: One-Eyed Men Are Kings (2)

and when he is asked how he became blind, he begins to spin a yarn about his experience in the last war. Through pantomime he shows the men how he had to use a mine sweeper to find land mines; then to show them how a mine had exploded right in his face, he throws up his hands for effect, letting the leash slip away. Terrified by the noise, the little dog runs off.

7. The gendarme and another man help our "blind" man home. When he enters the apartment, the cleaning lady sees him. As she scrutinizes him, she becomes suspicious that he is drunk--after all, why else would a gendarme be helping him up the stairs?

   Upstairs, he sees the little dog has returned home safely. His mother, of course, is upset, so he begins to explain what happened (to cover up for his duplicity). But at that moment the cleaning lady comes into the room, shoves him out of the way, and whispers in his mother's ear. Distraught, the mother hands the cleaning lady the little dog's leash.

8. Defeated, the little man walks the streets alone. We see him again by the quiet park where he had found so much happiness and fulfillment. He stands by the fence, looking through the trees at the men sitting inside, conversing with each other as usual. But he cannot go in. The look in his eyes shows that he feels incapable of explaining his actions to them. He walks away, and the camera pulls back to show him at long range, a lonely man.

* * * * * * * *

Film Study Notes

STRUCTURE

In telling a story without words, the director uses a simple structure, repeating a series of key scenes, first to show how much our little man is intimidated, then to show how his blindness intimidates people in similar scenes. The director also begins and ends the film with a similar scene, showing the man walking the streets alone. In this way he creates a circular structure: the little man ends where he began. lonely and unfulfilled.

MUSIC

The above structure is also reinforced by the use of two musical themes. The main theme accompanies those sequences of the film that show the man dominated by his mother, the cleaning lady, the dog, and all the people he interacts with the first time he walks the dog. The secondary theme, with a lively, playful air, accompanies the scenes in the park and follows the story through section 6. Here the music underscores the exhilarating turn of events the man begins to experience. When his ruse is exposed, however, he becomes the same melancholy, disheartened man he was in the beginning, and the director employs the first musical theme to reinforce that outcome.

* * * * * * * *

Questions for Discussion: One-Eyed Men Are Kings

I. The Little Man.

1. What is your attitude toward the man at the beginning of the film?

2. In what ways is the little man intimidated by everyone around him?

II. In The Park.

3. How are the scenes in the park different from earlier scenes? What values are suggested by those scenes?

4. How does the relationship of the man and the dog change after they visit the park?

5. How is the man responsible for his own downfall?

6. Why can't the man return to the park and rejoin his friends?

III. General Questions.

7. What does the film tell us about the way we treat people based on stereotypical attitudes?

8. In what ways does the film suggest we are "blind" to others?

9. What is your attitude toward the man at the end of the film?

10. What statement do you think the film makes about aging?

11. What statement do you think the film makes about friendship?

Peege

Summary of Sequences

1. The film begins with a family leaving their house to make a Christmas visit. Besides the parents, there are three sons. As the car travels down the road, we follow their conversation inside the car. In the back seat, the younger sons seem disconnected from the past, out of touch with the memories of past Christmases that are first mentioned by the mother. In contrast, Greg, who is sitting next to them by the window, seems attuned to the past. The camera focuses on him, looking out the window, lost in thought.

   This leads to a flashback of Greg and his grandmother, Peege, on an outing when Greg was a small boy. We see the two of them alone in Peege's car, while she gives Greg an ice cream cone and shares hers with their dog. Peege is bubbly, excitable, almost raucous in her mannerisms.

2. We return to the scene in the car. We learn that Peege, who is now blind, has been in the nursing home eight years, and Greg has not seen her for two years. This scene portrays the reactions of the family to Peege's condition. The mother's view: "Give me a pill if I ever turn out like her." The father suffers in silence. Greg asks sensitive, probing questions, revealing his concern for Peege. He even asks, "Dad, can she chew?" The mother repeatedly answers questions that are addressed to her husband, but Greg keeps pressing his father for answers. Later he asks, "How long do you think she'll last?" At first the mother looks at her husband for an answer, but receiving no signal, she responds, "This will probably be your last visit."

3. They arrive at the home, and as they drive up, we see several shots of old people pulling back the window shades and peering out at the visitors. Inside the home, the air suddenly becomes charged with the tension of the family's discomfort at their surroundings. The mother's reaction: "This place always smells so bad." The nurse comes out to tell them that Peege is now "ready" to be seen.

   The family follows the nurse down the hallway to Peege's room. Greg is the last to follow, and as he hangs back, the director focuses on his point of view as he looks briefly into some of the rooms. He sees an old person in bed, another being helped out of a wheelchair, and a group of residents watching television.

4. As Greg enters Peege's room, we again see the scene from his point of view. We see an old woman with gray hair seated in the far corner of the room, in a large chair by the window. When Greg says, "Hi, Nanna," we see a close-up of Peege, her eyes spotlighted by a warm, soft light that seems to emanate from a mysterious source.

   As the visit begins, Greg is again set apart from the others. He remains on the opposite side of the room from the rest of the family. After an awkward beginning, the mother attempts to inject some humor and liveliness into the scene, by playfully spraying some cologne (Peege's first Christmas present from the family) into the air. But this gesture seems only to deepen the sense of gloom felt in the air. While this is going on, we see that Greg is again deep in thought: from his point of view we see him notice Peege's gnarled hand and then the catheter that is only partly concealed by some of Peege's clothing.

Summary of Sequences: Peege (2)

The mother hands Peege a cookie, and we see the two hands reach out, but Peege's hand can only grasp at the cookie, and some crumbs fall away when she reaches it up to her mouth. We see on the mother's face a look of dread, as if in staring at Peege she is seeing something she herself might somehow become. As the family begins to tell Peege the current events they are involved in, Greg begins to look around the room, and this leads to a second flashback.

Filmed in warm tones, we see the young Greg in the arms of Peege at one of his birthday celebrations. She holds him lovingly in her arms and laughs heartily, letting him taste some of the frosting on the cake.

5. Back to the nursing home. As the conversations continue, and Peege seems unresponsive to it, Greg again notices some of his surroundings.

This leads to another flashback. We see Peege with the young child Greg, winding up her old victrola and then dancing around the room with him, wildly spinning and weaving about. While they dance, the shot dissolves into another shot of Peege and Greg dancing, but this time both are older, and Greg now is an adolescent. They keep dancing, and the shot again dissolves into a shot of an older Peege and an older Greg dancing, showing the passage of time and the continuity of experience.

6. We return to the present. The father helps Peege unwrap another of her presents, a small reindeer, stuffed in bright red cloth. He lets her touch the reindeer, and she holds it up to her face. Here the father begins to break down, and he has to get up and stand at the window in order to avoid embarrassment.

Standing at the window, he mentions Peege's "chipmunk friends," and the youngest son suddenly recalls a little chipmunk, Scooter, that the family once had as a pet. Peege remembers Scooter. Greg smiles at this, but the father, not picking up on this happy memory from the past, says, "We have another present for you." No more is said about Scooter.

7. Greg suddenly spies an old footstool partially hidden under the bed he is sitting next to. He pulls it out and holds it up, saying, "I remember this." We see everyone on the other side of the room look toward Greg, and when he says, "I remember crawling up on this stool," we see a close-up of Peege, her face aglow as the memory moves her. But at that moment the mother says, "That was quite awhile ago," and we note a look of disdain flicker across Greg's face. Back to Peege, whose enthusiasm seems to deflate at once. Greg puts the stool away.

Another flashback, this time with a teenaged Greg who is staying at Peege's house. Late at night, they watch a horror movie, and Peege brings out some wine. As before, she is loud, excitable, laughing heartily and making fun of her clumsiness. When she gets a kink in her back, Greg helps her to the couch and puts the footstool (see above) under her legs. Peege laughs off this infirmity, and they have a rousing good time.

8. Return to the nursing home. Peege begins to cough, and when her coughing continues, we see the mother staring at Peege in horror. No one offers to call a nurse (compare Greg's reaction later). Suddenly the visit is over, and everyone makes hurried good-byes. All kiss Peege goodbye, except for the mother.

Summary of Sequences: Peege (3)

As they leave the room, the mother calls out, "We'll see you next time, Peege." The father expresses concern that he remember to give the nurses their Christmas check. Greg stays back.

9. We see a long shot of the room, Peege quiet in her chair. From Greg's point of view, we see a series of close-ups, of the Christmas wrappings, cookie crumbs, and the red stuffed reindeer. Greg walks toward Peege, not stopping until he is sitting next to her. "This is Greg," hey says. "I know that somewhere inside there is the Grandma I remember, alive, laughing." He begins to reminisce, recalling all of the memories we saw in the flashbacks noted above. His constant refrain is, "Do you remember?" She answers each time, "Yes." While he talks, he reaches out and touches her, stroking her hand, then the side of her head.

When she begins to cough again, he shows concern, asking her if she is all right or if he should call a nurse. But she says no. He tries to make her more comfortable in the chair.

In a flashback we see Peege entertaining the young boy Greg and his friend Debbie. The children have just come in from playing in the snow, and Peege rubs their feet and entertains them by reading them stories. She embellishes her story-telling with her raucous tone and silly mannerisms.

10. "I remember," Peege says. Greg keeps talking: "Your laugh would always make me happy." He sits close to her, almost as if in an embrace, and he rests her head against his, stroking her hair. He asks her what she thinks about all day, and her answer is, "Going home." He asks, "You're not lonely here, are you?" "No."

Suddenly he says, "I've got to go. . . . My thoughts and my prayers are with you. And I love you." As he stands at the door saying goodbye, he is crying. He walks away.

11. Outside, he approaches the car, and a worried mother asks, "We wondered what had happened to you." He doesn't answer, but simply gets into the car, and as they drive off, he looks back over his shoulder at the home.

12. Back to a close-up of Peege, who almost imperceptibly at first, but then more clearly, begins to smile. As she smiles wider, her eyes shine warmly, and we know for sure that she has been touched by Greg's reminiscences.

When the credits go up to end the film, we see various shots of old photographs of Peege and Greg, experiencing some of the happy times we saw in the flashbacks.

* * * * * * * *

Film Study Notes

From a technical point of view, Peege is a sophisticated film, and for those people who have an interest in the director's control over his material, there are several points to be made regarding the editing, composition, lighting, and the use of camera techniques.

Film Study Notes: Peege (2)

EDITING

1) A basic example of editing in the film is the use of several flashbacks, which interrupt the narrative. Besides helping the viewer identify with Greg, the flashbacks break up what otherwise might have been long and drawn-out scenes. In some ways the flashbacks relieve the tension of the visitation scene, for their joyousness and energy are a marked contrast to the sober mood in Peege's room.

The flashbacks also suggest some of the stages of Peege's aging process. Just as Greg grows older through the flashbacks, Peege ages, too, expetiencing some physical infirmities (section 7) in her later years.

2) In sections 1 and 2 the director arranges the conversation between the members of the family around a limited number of shots, separating the characters effectively and focusing the scene on our identification with Greg, the oldest son.

Note how the director separates the characters: a) shots of the two younger sons in the back seat, b) shots of the mother and father in the front seat, c) shots of the mother and father in the front seat, with Greg visible behind them, in the back seat, d) shots of Greg, alone, sitting by the window in the back seat, and e) close-ups of the father, in the front seat.

With this shot selection, the director can visually present several points:

--the oldest son is separated from his younger brothers, who lack his emotional attachment to the past

--the parents in the front seat seem separated, even opposed, in the way they approach the subject of Peege's condition

--the shots of the parents in the front seat, but with Greg visible behind and between them, portrays Greg as a person who is trying to cut through the triteness of the conversation and introduce sensitive subject matter

--only Greg and his father receive close-ups, which suggests a connection between the two of them that is not shared by the mother

3) As the car arrives at the nursing home (section 3), the viewer has had as yet no opportunity to form an opinion of what the nursing home will be like. However, when the director alternates three shots of old people pulling back window shades to peer out at the visitors with three shots of the car pulling up to the home, the viewer forms a subjective opinion of life in the home immediately. Feelings of loneliness, isolation, helplessness are suggested by this technique.

4) Throughout the film, the viewer shares Greg's point of view. To accomplish this, the director often begins with a shot of Greg alone in the frame, sometimes in a close-up. We see him reacting to his surroundings, then see in the next shot or series of shots what he is reacting to. In section 3, for example, the surroundings are the three rooms Greg looks into briefly as he walks down the hallway. After each shot inside the residents' rooms, the director comes back to a shot of Greg, reacting to

Film Study Notes: Peege (3)

what he has seen. This technique is effective because the viewer, in seeing what Greg sees, is able to record a reaction as strong as Greg's. In doing so, we feel what Greg feels. However, we also share what objectively might be called his biases and/or misconceptions about his surroundings.

COMPOSITION

When Greg enters the room (section 4), he sits on the opposite side of the room, and we in effect sit with him and watch the awkwardness and discomfort of the rest of the members of the family. We see that the family is fragmented and isolated from each other and from Peege. The two boys sit by the window, the parents sit across from Peege.

Compare this separation with the composition of the last few scenes. In section 9 Greg walks up to sit next to Peege so that he can touch her. Eventually, the two of them are shown to be almost in an embrace, Peege's head resting against Greg's, and his hand stroking her hair.

LIGHTING

Compare the scenes filmed in the present with the scenes in the flashbacks. Note how warm tones dominate in the flashbacks, whereas cold, blue-gray tones abound in the nursing home scenes.

In section 4, the first time we see Peege, I noted a light shining on Peege's eyes, which seemed to emanate from a mysterious source. Although Peege is blind, the director suggests here that she possesses a vision of sorts, a light that is part of her being, and which even adds to her beauty. The mother had said, "Now she doesn't even know if we're there or not," but this light apparently connects her with a light of understanding the mother is unaware of. Peege's association with this light prepares the viewer for the final scene, when Peege's face metaphorically "lights up."

CAMERA TECHNIQUES

Several times in the film the director uses extreme close-ups to magnify our subjective reaction to the action in the scene. Three examples:

--In section 3, Greg and his brother examine an ivory-soap Bible, put together by Girl Scouts and then given to each of the residents. "Aren't they sweet?" the nurse adds. The younger brother is not impressed.
--In section 4, Greg notices Peege's crippled hand and the catheter, his first real evidence of her incapacitation.
--When Greg reminisces about the footstool, section 7, the viewer sees a brief extreme close-up of the needlepoint Peege had made herself years ago, and this detail, showing the beauty of her handiwork, adds to the meaning Greg feels in his memory.

* * * * * * * *

Questions for Discussion: Peege

I. Family Attitudes Toward Peege's Condition.

(Sections 1 and 2, in the car)

1. How do Greg's questions about Peege's condition show that his attitudes toward Peege are different from the ones held by other members of the family? Why do you think this is the case?

2. How does the director help us identify with Greg in these scenes? Why does the director want us to identify with Greg at all?

3. Why does Greg keep addressing his questions in the car to his father? Why is Greg's father so quiet in the car?

4. What is the viewer's attitude toward Greg's mother after seeing her in these early scenes? Why do you think she says, "Give me a pill if I ever turn out like her"?

5. At one point Greg's mother says that Peege "doesn't even know if we're here or not." Why do you think she says this? On the basis of what you see later in this film, is she right? How do you know?

II. The Visit with Peege.

6. What intentions lay behind the family's gifts of perfume, cookies, a stuffed animal, and a nightgown for Peege? How do you think Peege responded to these gifts?

7. Although everyone participates in the conversation, all appear to be uncomfortable. Why?

8. Who is suffering the most in this scene?

9. Both the mother and father break down and cry in this scene. Why?

10. Why is the mention of the chipmunk Scooter, and Peege's memory of the pet, a potential turning point in the conversation?

11. When Greg sees the old footstool with its needlepoint covering, and launches into a reminiscence, why does he shoot an angry look at his mother when she says in an offhanded way, "That was quite awhile ago."?

III. Greg Alone with Peege.

12. When Greg is alone with Peege, his real visit with her begins. What are some of the specific things Greg does that makes this visit different from the earlier one?

Questions for Discussion: Peege (2)

13. What is the reason Greg keeps asking Peege, "Do you remember?" What is he trying to do?

14. What do you think Greg learns from his visit with Peege? Does he learn anything about older people? Does he learn anything about himself?

15. Why does Peege smile at the end of the film? What effect did that smile have on you?

IV. General Questions.

16. What was your impression of the Peege you saw in the flashbacks? How did those feelings compare with your response to the Peege you saw in the nursing home?

17. Did the film make you think of a friend or relative who is an older person? What sort of thoughts did the film evoke concerning your relationship to them?

18. How do the attitudes and actions of Greg's mother affect our response to her? Does the film fairly portray her response to the situation?

19. What do we learn about the role of reminiscing in the lives of both young and old people by watching this film?

20. What specific positive attitudes and actions can we learn from this film with regard to our future visits to a nursing home?

The String-Bean

Summary of Sequences

1. We see the interior of a small apartment, filmed in black and white (b & w). The camera focuses on a box of hand-made coin purses, a sewing basket, and an old woman at an ancient sewing machine. Completing another purse, the old woman puts her machine away, removes a pan from the cupboard, and puts a handful of beans in the pan. Moving slowly and deliberately, she goes outside and fills a pan with water from a dingy sink in the narrow hallway. Then we see her leave her apartment.

2. Suddenly the film is in color (C), and we see the old woman entering a lovely park in the city. All around her are flower gardens, fountains, and well-clipped lawns. She rests on a park bench for a while to enjoy her surroundings.

3. When she returns home (in b & w), we see her find a flower pot in a trash can outside her building. She takes the pot upstairs, knocks out the old plant, and plants one of the bean seeds in the pot.
   Later, as she is cleaning her apartment, she stops to look at the plant. We see (in C) the new shoot bursting forth from the soil. Then (in b & w) to suggest the passing of time, the director follows with four shots of the plant at different stages of its growth.

4. The next four scenes (in b & w) show her caring for the plant, protecting it from several dangers. Later, we see her working in the narrow hallway, where she notices the light coming through the skylight. The director shows ten brief shots of the plant, positioned in several different locations in the hallway; it is clear that the old woman has moved the plant each time so that it will have more sun.
   She again goes to the park (in C). She takes the plant out of her sewing basket and sets it on the sidewalk in front of her, looking at it in the sunshine and protecting it from anyone who walks too close.

5. At home (in b & w), she stops her work for a moment to examine the plant. She looks out her window and sees the blue sky (in C) above the four walls. With a determined look in her eyes she picks up the plant.
   We see her (in C) take the plant to the park. Watching out for the gardeners, who are weeding the flower beds, she finds a likely spot, removes the plant from her sewing basket, shakes it out of the pot, and plants it among the flowers. Satisfied, she sits back to enjoy her string-bean.
   Several scenes follow, some in her apartment (in b & w) and some in the park (in C), as she follows the progress of the plant's growth in its new location.

6. One day at the park, however, she sees the gardeners huddled over the string-bean. We see her in the background, as one of the men violently uproots the plant, throwing it into his basket. When they walk off, she approaches the basket, lifts up the plant, and examines it closely. Without hesitating, she picks off several mature beans and walks away.
   Returning home, she walks directly into the kitchen (b & w) and takes

Summary of Sequences: The String-Bean (2)

down the old flower pot. Smiling, she puts one of the seeds from the beans she had picked into the pot, covering it with dirt. Then she opens the window and sets the pot on the sill. When it begins to rain, she opens the window again and moves the pot closer to the edge, watching her new string-bean carefully as the rain water fills the pot, moistening the soil.

* * * * * * * *

Film Study Notes

PHOTOGRAPHY

The director, Edmond Sechan, effectively uses both color and black and white photography to contrast the two worlds the old woman lives in. The black and white world of her meager one-room apartment, the run-down tenement building, and the gloomy alley, represent the deprivation and despair of old age. Set against this environment is the color world of the park, the flower gardens, and the blue sky. In terms of metaphor, the two worlds are despair and hope, death and life. When she enters the world of color, she participates in the life available to her. She is not limited to one mode of existence, and the string-bean plant is able to move with her from one to the other.

Thus, the shifting between the two worlds invites us to accept the reality of both. The old woman faces life as it is: sadness with happiness, gloom with joy, desolation with renewal.

EDITING

Editing is often used by filmmakers to condense time. In this film, however, the editing helps characterize the old woman and allows the viewer to identify with her caring attitude. For instance, in sections 4 and 5 we see her look first at the plant, then out a window. In contrast to the black and white world surrounding the plant, the window offers warm blue sky. We can almost see the woman thinking in this combination of shots. In both cases she chooses to offer the plant a chance for nurturing and growth. Another example occurs in section 4, when we see ten brief shots of the string-bean plant positioned in different locations in the narrow hallway. In seconds the director's use of editing reveals the old woman's concern for the plant's growth. Each shot represents a commitment of time and energy on her part.

* * * * * * *

Questions for Discussion

I. The Woman's World.

1. How does the environment we see the old woman living in at the beginning of the film affect our attitude toward her?

2. How is the park a contrast to the old woman's apartment?

Questions for Discussion: The String-Bean (2)

II. The Woman and the String-Bean.

3. How is the old woman's relationship to the plant like the relationship of a mother to her child?

4. How did you feel when you saw the old woman watch the gardeners uproot the bean plant?

5. What do you think the bean plant comes to mean to the old woman?

6. Why was it significant that the old woman come home at the end of the film and plant a seed from the string-bean plant?

III. General Questions.

7. Why was it appropriate for the director to employ both color and black and white photography in the film?

8. What statement does the film make about the importance of an older person having an avocation?

9. What image of aging is presented in this film?

10. How would this film be used appropriately for audiences interested in the religious aspects of aging?

11. What do you think would be some of the differences between the way younger audiences would respond to this film and the way older audiences would respond to it?

The Transformation of Mabel Wells

Summary of Sequences

1. The film begins with a scene in New York's Central Park, where an elaborate clock, with large figures of animals, sounds the time. The narrator notes that over the years many "people have gathered beneath the clock to gather a moment of whimsy--everyone, that is, except Mabel Wells." We see Mabel, an older woman dressed in a black coat and a bright red hat, pulling her grocery cart as she walks right under the watch tower, not even looking up. Instead, she pushes people out of the way and flings her arms at the pigeons as if to say, "Get out of my way."

2. Mabel leaves her apartment building for her morning walk. The narrator notes that she left every morning at 8:15 and made her rounds in the park. When her father died in 1948, she had begun coming to the park and now considered it her "property," something to be maintained against what she saw as the careless behavior of the people who frequented it. As she leaves, she responds to her neighbor's greeting with a bitter complaint about some insignificant matter and strides gruffly away.

3. We see Mabel from a distance as she moves through the park. "Her route was always the same." Here and there she stops to complain--first about the ponies, because they just "go round and round," then about the carousel, because it just went "up and down." Meanwhile, "along she went, round and round."

   As she climbs a long flight of stairs, leaving the park for the day, a young boy collides with her just as she disappears around a corner. We see her grocery cart tumble down the stairs and realize Mabel has been hurt.

4. After being in the hospital for four weeks, Mabel returns to her apartment on her eightieth birthday. We see her seated in a chair, reading many of the cards her neighbors had sent. Around her are some of the presents they also sent her. She sits quietly, thinking of what she has become. As we see several shots of old photographs of the family that are placed in the room, the narrator notes Mabel's sadness and loneliness. The camera stays on Mabel, deep in thought, her hand restlessly folding a white doily on the stand next to her chair. Then the shot slowly goes out of focus.

5. The scene comes back in focus in a flashback, where we see a young Mabel Wells sitting next to her Japanese housemaid. The woman is showing her how to make origami figures. The woman says, "How special it is to make happiness." As she folds the paper she says, "Bend a little, fold a little. Bending and folding are difficult, but if you keep trying, you can make something wonderful."

6. Back to the present. With her back to us, Mabel works away at her table. Then she gets up, puts on her coat and hat, and leaves her apartment, carrying two colorful shopping bags.

   Outside, she sees her neighbor again, but this time she is bright and gay, excitedly telling him of all the kind things the children have done for her.

Summary of Sequences: The Transformation of Mabel Wells (2)

7. In the park, we see Mabel handing out her origami butterflies, brightly-colored, to some children. Then we see many scenes of people who have received a gift from Mabel--joggers, people on a park bench, a couple in a hansom--all transformed by her gift. Mabel strides off, swinging her shopping bags. The narrator concludes: "And so Mabel Wells still goes to the park every day. Not at 8:00 or 8:15, but when she feels like it."

* * * * * * * *

Film Study Notes

CAMERA TECHNIQUE

The viewer's attitude toward Mabel Wells is controlled to some extent by the director's use of long and extreme long shots of Mabel as she makes her daily round through the park. These shots keep the viewer at a distance from Mabel so that the viewer does not identify with her too closely. We need to see her objectively, as the "block character."

When she is filmed in her apartment (section 4), we see her at a closer range and can then begin to feel her humanness. This positive attitude toward her is reinforced by the use of editing. The shots of the old photographs juxtaposed with the shots of the old woman sitting alone in the room make us feel the depth of her loneliness and help us identify with her. Of course, the use of the flashback is an important means of helping us understand the character and preparing us for her transformation.

COMPOSITION

A specific shot used by the director also helps us visually understand how greatly Mabel is controlled by her routine in the first part of the film. While she is in the park, we see in the foreground part of the Alice in Wonderland statue in Central Park. Specifically, we see the bronze statue of the hare, holding up his watch, late for important date. In the far distance, in the middle of the frame, we see Mabel, moving off to complete her "important" work of keeping the park tidy.

Another example of composition occurs when Mabel stands near the merry-go-round, complaining about the noise and silliness of it all. We see her standing behind part of the iron gate, holding the metal bars like a prisoner does. In one sense, Mabel has imprisoned herself, in her routine and in her irrational bitterness toward others. This shot, as well as the one above, is a visual metaphor.

* * * * * * * *

Questions for Discussion

I. Before Her Transformation.

1. Why was Mabel Wells considered the "block character"?

2. How was Miss Wells like the stereotypical "shopping bag lady"?

Questions for Discussion: The Transformation of Mabel Wells (2)

3. How did time control Mabel Wells' daily life?

II. Her Transformation.

4. How are the Japanese housemaid's words on "bending" and "folding" appropriate to the characteristics Mabel Wells had exhibited early in the film? How does her advice help Mabel change in the present?

5. How does Miss Wells compare to the stereotypical "shopping bag lady" after her transformation?

6. How does Mabel Wells' transformation affect the people around her?

7. How does her transformation free her from the dominance of routine?

Weekend

Summary of Sequences:

1. Extreme long shots of a city, with its many rooftops, then the camera moves in on one specific building.

The camera moves right through several close-ups of bedroom slippers, medicine bottles, and pills on a table, then to an old man sitting in a chair. The camera pulls back to show him looking out the window. A young boy comes into the room. While a radio blares, we see the boy crawl up on a chair and rummage among bottles on top of a dresser. He is looking for some marbles. We see the old man in the distance, looking on at this action. Suddenly the marbles cascade to the floor.

In comes the father, who pulls the boy up from the floor and takes him out of the room. After they leave, the old man picks up one stray marble and holds it up to the light.

2. Various scenes follow showing preparation for a picnic. The father shaves the grandfather. The parents pack food and drink in a cooler in the kitchen. The daughter-in-law helps the old man dress. The father carries the grandfather's chair away. Finally, we see the family outside by the car, and we notice the grandfather's chair is strapped by ropes to the top of the little car.

3. The car, with chair strapped to its top, rolls down city streets, then out to the country, then off into a trail in a meadow.

The father unloads the chair, carries it halfway up the hill, and following the old man's directions, finally sets it down in the low grass. We see the young boy first running through the meadow, then playing with the marbles.

Scenes of a family picnic. The old man eats voraciously. Afterwards, we see the family asleep, the empty plates, and hear the radio blaring. The old man is asleep in his chair. The father is the first to wake up. He goes off into the meadow to relieve himself, and when the old man sees him, he calls his son over to help him up. Again we see a shot of the young boy running through the meadow.

4. All begin to pack. The old man is back in his chair. He watches the parents gather all the trash. All seem to go about their business isolated from one another. Finally, we see a group scene with all of the family saying goodbye to the grandfather. Especially touching is the scene when the young boy embraces him. When they have left, he sits in his chair, looking serene, and holds the marble up to the light. He smiles.

5. The car drives out of the meadow and joins the traffic on the main road. The camera returns to the meadow, and as it begins to pan to the right, we see at long range an old woman sitting alone in a chair, then another old person, then another, until we realize that the entire hillside is filled with old people sitting in their chairs, all at some distance from one another. The last shot is of the grandfather, sitting alone below two great trees.

Film Study Notes: Weekend

Although this is a Yugoslavian film, there is little dialogue, and what dialogue exists is insignificant. All meanings are conveyed visually and with the use of a sound track.

COMPOSITION

One specific shot used by the director (scene 7) visually conveys a significant emotional response. The old man remains seated in his chair while the family says goodbye to him. As the young boy reaches up to embrace him, notice the mother, standing to the left of the frame, turned away from this show of love, and obviously suffering a good deal. The content of this shot suggests that this is a final goodbye.

The last scene of the film also conveys a great deal of emotion. When the family leaves, the viewer may think the film has come to an end. Leaving the old man alone in the meadow represents a cruel act done to one man by one family. But when the director comes back to the meadow to pan across the entire hillside, showing many older people who have all been left alone in their chairs, the viewer understands that the impact of the film is to be more universal than the effect of one family's interaction with their grandparent.

Finally, this last scene makes a visual association between the old people in their chairs, all occupying a separate spot on the hillside, and the tombstones of a cemetery.

* * * * * * * *

Questions for Discussion

I. The Young Boy and the Old Man.

1. How do the marbles serve as a link between the young boy and the old man? What do you think is the significance of the marble to the old man?

2. What effect do you think this picnic will have on the young boy?

II. General Questions.

3. Who is suffering the most during the farewell scene? Why?

4. What is the significance of the title, Weekend?

5. The film could have ended after section 4, with the old man holding up the marble to the light. What statement would that ending have made in terms of the family's treatment of the old man? What was gained by adding another set of scenes (section 5)?

6. Why do you think the director portrays the older people in section 5 all sitting at some distance from one another?

7. What statement does the film make about how we treat older people?

CHAPTER TWO: SUGGESTED PROGRAMMING

The following suggestions for future programming are based on a division of recommended films into several related categories.

How to Use this Section:

1. Begin by scanning Suggested Programming: Categories, which appears at the bottom of this page. For those categories that will fit into your programming, you will want to know what films are recommended.
2. For this information turn to the List of Recommended Films, which follows. There each of the fourteen categories is accompanied by a list of recommended films that deal with the subject.
3. Summaries and analyses of these films can be found in the Annotated Critical Bibliography at the end of the workbook.
4. Readers who have specific age groups in mind should consult a section on Films for Specific Age Groups, which follows the List of Recommended Films.
5. NOTE: The List of Recommended Films is not all-inclusive; that is; some films found in the Annotated Critical Bibliography are not found in the listing in this section. Readers should spend some time scanning the Annotated Critical Bibliography for other films they may be interested in using.

Suggested Programming: Categories

I. RELATIONSHIPS: Older Persons Interacting with Others.

1. Family relationships: the older person as grandparent
2. The older person as a positive role model for the young
3. Family and intergenerational conflicts
4. Interaction with health care professionals

II. VALUES: Characteristics and Values of Old Age.

5. The importance of reminiscences to older persons
6. Original characters
7. Older persons as close to nature
8. Craftsmen and artists
9. Successful aging
10. Religious values
11. Cycle of life

III. STRESS: Problems and Stresses of Growing Old.

12. Loneliness of old age
13. Effect of grief or loss
14. Learning how to face death

List of Recommended Films

I. RELATIONSHIPS

1. Family relationships: the older person as grandparent

   Annie and the Old One
   Death of a Gandy Dancer
   Grandpa
   Mandy's Grandmother
   My Grandson Lew
   Peege
   Portrait of Grandpa Doc
   The Street
   Weekend

2. The older person as a positive role model for the young

   Annie and the Old One
   Death of a Gandy Dancer
   Mailbox
   Mandy's Grandmother
   My Grandson Lew
   Peege
   Portrait of Grandpa Doc
   The Violin

3. Family and intergenerational conflicts

   Death of a Gandy Dancer
   Grandpa
   Mailbox
   Mandy's Grandmother
   Peege
   Portrait of Grandpa Doc
   The Shopping Bag Lady
   The Street
   Weekend

4. Interaction with health care professionals

   Death of a Gandy Dancer
   The Detour
   Nell and Fred
   Passing Quietly Through
   Peege
   The Street
   The Wild Goose

II. VALUES

5. Importance of reminiscences to the older person

   Arthur and Lillie
   Aunt Arie
   (cont.)

5. Importance of reminiscences to the older person (cont.)

Foxfire
Grandpa
Last Stand Farmer
Passing Quietly Through
Peege

6. Original characters

Men

Last Stand Farmer
Spider
The Violin Maker
The Wild Goose

Women

At 99
Aunt Arie
Imogen Cunningham: Photographer
Ruth Stout's Garden
The Transformation of Mabel Wells

Men and Women

Arthur and Lillie
Nell and Fred

7. Older persons as close to nature

Men

Angus
Birch Canoe Builder
Death of a Gandy Dancer
Foxfire
Greenhouse
Halvor Landsverk:
Woodcarver
The Last Leaf
Last Stand Farmer
Lifeclimb
Maple Sugar Farmer
Portraits of Aging
(the beekeeper)
The Violin

Women

Annie and the Old One
Aunt Arie
The Lady and the Owl
Ruth Stout's Garden
The String-Bean

8. Craftsmen and Artists

Craftsmen

Birch Canoe Builder
Death of a Gandy Dancer
Halvor Landsver:
Woodcarver
The Violin Maker

Artists

Antonia: Portrait of a Woman
The Art of Age
Love it Like a Fool
Imogen Cunningham: Photographer
Louise Nevelson in Process

9. Successful aging

Antonia: Portrait of a Woman
The Art of Age
Arthur and Lillie
(cont.)

9. Successful aging (cont.)

At 99
Love it Like a Fool
Portrait of Grandpa Doc
Portraits of Aging
Ruth Stout's Garden
Transformation of Mabel Wells

10. Religious values

Annie and the Old One
Lifeclimb
Martin the Cobbler
Though I Walk Through the Valley

11. The cycle of life

Annie and the Old One
The Blessings of Love
Death of a Gandy Dancer
The String-Bean
Weekend
Youth, Maturity, Old Age

III. STRESS

12. Loneliness of old age

The Father
I Think They Call Him John
Mailbox
Martin the Cobbler
One-Eyed Men Are Kings
Passing Quietly Through
Peege
The String-Bean
Tomorrow Again
The Transformation of Mabel Wells

13. The effect of grief or loss

The Blessings of Love
The Detour
The Father
Mailbox
Martin the Cobbler
The String-Bean

14. Learning how to face death

Annie and the Old One
Death of a Gandy Dancer
The Detour
(cont.)

14. Learning how to face death (cont.)

My Grandson Lew
The Old Woman
The Street
Though I Walk Through the Valley

Films for Specific Age Groups

Films particularly suited for younger audiences: elementary school age

Annie and the Old One
The Greenhouse
My Grandson Lew
The Old Woman
Portrait of Grandpa Doc
The Street
The String-Bean
The Violin

Films particularly suited for younger audiences: junior and senior high age

Death of a Gandy Dancer
Foxfire
Mandy's Grandmother
Peege
Portrait of Grandpa Doc
The Shopping Bag Lady
The Transformation of Mabel Wells

Films particularly suited for older audiences

The Art of Age
At 99
Last Stand Farmer
Lifeclimb
Mailbox
Martin the Cobbler
Nell and Fred
Peege
Portraits of Aging
Ruth Stout's Garden
The Violin Maker
Weekend

CHAPTER THREE: ANNOTATED CRITICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Introduction:

Although several bibliographies of films on aging exist, the following bibliography includes a critical assessment of each film as well as a summary of the film's content. By adding a critical component, the author hopes that potential users of films will be able to match their interests and objectives more accurately with the resources available to them. The author is solely responsible for the content of the Annotated Critical Bibliography.

How to use the Annotated Critical Bibliography:

Films are listed alphabetically in the Bibliography. Under each film readers will find the following information:

1. Release date of the film
2. Length of the film in minutes
3. Distributor (abbreviated: see List of Distributors for addresses and phone numbers)
4. If the film is in black and white, it will be noted by the abbreviation b & w. All other films are in color
5. If the film is a fictional depiction of aging, fiction will be noted; if it tells the story of real people, often in a documentary style, non-fiction will be noted
6. Where the film may be rented--
   - If it is available from the Audio-Visual Library Service, University of Minnesota, the letters UM and the six-digit order number will be noted
   - If it is available from the Minneapolis Public Library, MPL will be noted
   - If it is available from the St. Paul Public Library, StPL will be noted

SAMPLE ENTRY: Homespun
1955, 20 min. EBEC non-fiction
UM (5X0029) MPL, StPL

EXPLANATION: Homespun was released in 1955, runs 20 minutes, is available for purchase (and possibly rental) from Encyclopedia Brittanica Educational Corp., and is non-fictional in nature. It may be rented from the University of Minnesota (order number 5X0029), and the Minneapolis and St. Paul Public Libraries.

NOTE: Seven films in the Annotated Critical Bibliography are not currently available from either the University of Minnesota or the Minneapolis and St. Paul Public Libraries. These films are noted below and rental information is provided. Although in some cases they are

available from more than one source, the one closest to Minnesota has been listed for the sake of economy of space.

Angus (p.57)
University of California--Berkeley
Extension Media Center 2223
Fulton St.
Berkeley, CA 94720
(415) 642-0460

Aunt Arie (p.59)
Southern Illinois Univ. at Carbondale
Learning Resources Center
Carbondale, IL 62901
(618) 453-2258

Foxfire (p.62)
University of Michigan
Audio-Visual Education Center
416 Fourth St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
(313) 764-5361

I Think They Call Him John (p. 64)
University of Michigan--see above

The Old Woman (p. 71)
University of Michigan--see above

Passing Quietly Through (p.71)
University of Michigan--see above

Portraits of Aging (p. 73)
Centron Educational Films
1621 West 9th St., Box 687
Lawrence, KS 66044
(913) 843-0400

FINAL NOTE: It is possible that the Audio-Visual Library Service, University of Minnesota, may be purchasing some of the above films in the future. Before contacting the above sources of rental, call them at (612) 373-3810 and ask about availability.

FILM RENTAL INFORMATION

Audio-Visual Library Service
Continuing Education and Extension
University of Minnesota
3300 University Ave. S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55414

All individuals and institutions within the United States are eligible to rent films. To place your telephone order, call (612) 373-3810 between 7:45 and 4:30 p. m., Monday through Friday. To schedule a preview of any of these media titles in our facilities, call (612) 373-3940.

Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center
Films Desk
Art, Music, and Films Dept.
300 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Borrowers with valid Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center cards and borrowers with valid cards from other MELSA libraries are eligible to rent films. To place your telephone order, call (612) 372-6558.

St. Paul Public Library
Films Desk
Arts and Audio-Visual Services
90 W. 4th St.
St. Paul, MN 55102

Films may be borrowed without charge by holders of adult St. Paul Public Library free cards. Holders of adult St. Paul Public Library non-resident pay cards or adult cards from a library that is a member of the Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA) may borrow films upon payment of a $3.00 per-program fee. In addition each borrower must sign a Film Service Agreement in person at the Films Desk. To place your telephone order, call (612) 224-3383, Extension 40.

Angus
1970, 12 min. NFBC non-fiction

This is a sentimental tribute to Farley Mowat's father, Angus Mowat, presenting a man close to the land and sea. Here is a man who has had a great dream to travel the wild oceans, and through colorful photography, and the sensitive use of music and poetry, the film evokes a portrait of a man who pursues his dream by repairing an old boat in a remote cabin. As he works, we hear him singing shanty songs while playing the banjo.

This lyrical film presents an image of an older man, but we never hear Angus talking about the past and revealing aspects of his character. As a portrait of aging, however, it would be suitable for use by various professional and educational organizations, especially those interested in how older people provide a link with the traditions and folklore of the past.

Annie and the Old One
1971, 15 min. BFA fiction
UM (5S1582) StPL

This film is a simple tale of a young Navajo girl's attempt to deny the reality of death in her life. As the narrator of the film says, "Annie's Navajo world was good." Her day is made up of school and chores, or watching her mother weave a Navajo rug to sell in the town, but "best of all were the evenings," when Annie could sit with her grandmother and enjoy stories from the past. However, when the old one announces to the family one day that she will die after the mother completes the rug that is now on her loom, Annie is shaken. Even though the old one gives Annie her weaving stick as a last gift, Annie refuses to use it to learn from her mother how to weave. She can only think of the rug on the loom, for when it is finished, the old one will die.

Because she doesn't want her grandmother to die, Annie tries to think of ways she can get into mischief, so that her mother will be diverted from her weaving. But each time Annie's plan fails, and finally she resorts to ripping out several strands of wool from the rug each night--until the old one finds her by the loom one night. Instead of punishing her, her grandmother takes her out to the hills and shows her that although it is impossible to stop time, we must learn to accept death just as we are given life. The next day Annie asks her mother to teach her how to weave, and she slips her weaving stick into the loom--as her mother had done as a child and as her grandmother had done as a child before her. Annie has accepted the lesson of time.

Although this film is often simplistic in characterization and in dialogue, its straightforward story conveys a powerful message. Here the Indian way of relating the individual to past and future generations underscores the importance of what the very young can learn from the old

ones in their family. The recommended audience for this film is elementary to junior high level. The film would be effective for all young people who are studying the way death is dealt with in another culture.

Antonia: Portrait of a Woman
1974, 58 min. PHENIX non-fiction
UM (1F0700)

This film provides an intimate portrait of a remarkable woman, Antonia Brico, who was the first woman to conduct a symphony orchestra, who formed the first women's symphony orchestra, and who is now the conductor of Denver's Brico Symphony. Throughout the film she reveals the depth and brilliance of her character. We see her rehearsing the orchestra, encouraging a young artist, recounting stories of famous musicians she has known, and recalling intimate moments in her life--such as the time she spent with Albert Schweitzer. All of her recollections are marked by an irrepressible sense of humor and vivid memory.

She attacks her work with total commitment, and she admits that when she has completed an evening's work conducting the orchestra, she is emotionally drained. "Either you ride very high or you drop very low." In a powerful scene she admits her frustration of being able to conduct only five times each year when she knows she is capable of conducting five times each month: "I don't let everybody know my heartbreak." But the film ends on an upbeat note, with her pounding out ragtime tunes on the piano, revealing again another side of her character.

This film is strongly recommended for junior high to adult audiences, especially those interested in learning about the compelling nature of artistic creativity, the struggle for women to be recognized for their achievements in our society, and the determination of older people to contribute to the lives of others. Knowing Ms. Brico is an unforgetable experience.

The Art of Age
1972, 27 min. LSB non-fiction
UM (7S1662) StPL

See Summary of Sequences

Arthur and Lillie
1976, 30 min. PFP non-fiction
UM (7S1414) StPL

This film, about 89-year-old Arthur Mayer and his wife Lillie, is actually two films: one about the Hollywood film industry, from its beginnings through WW II, and the other about one couple's example of successful aging. Arthur recalls his years with Paramount Pictures as a publicity man in the 1920's and then as owner of the Rialto Theatre in New York. At 78, Arthur became a professor of cinema, teaching courses at three American universities each year. We see him speaking to his students at Dartmouth, and then in a delightful scene we see Arthur and Lillie packing for their trip to

California, where he also teaches. The rapport they exhibit in this scene shows how well they know each other, and how satisfying their relationship is to them. Later, they are shown entertaining students at their New York apartment. The young people comment on how Arthur and Lillie don't get caught up in the past--their consciousnesses are in the present. Lillie sums up, "We've never held the other person back," and this formula for a successful relationship is a sign of how much they have enjoyed their lives.

The film could be used to supplement the study of film history, especially the Hollywood era, but its greatest strength lies in its vivid portrayal of two interesting and vital people.

At 99: Portrait of Louise Tandy Murch
1974, 25 min. SPCTRM non-fiction
UM (5S1415) MPL, StPL

"Drink your tea, remember me;
Drink it hot, forget me not!"

After watching this film, it is hard to forget Louise Tandy Murch, who at 99 has remarkable energy and imagination. We see her singing and playing the piano for a group of senior citizens, and along with her strong voice, her zestfulness and good humor carry the day. Later she addresses the group:

"Happiness is perfume inside you,
Sitting on the shelf;
And when you sprinkle some on others,
You spill some on yourself."

In a delightful scene she shows us how to stay physically fit. Wearing her exercise outfit, she does stretching exercises on a yoga board. "It feels so comfortable--it stimulates the blood." As to growing old, she says she is not afraid of death. When she gets tired or depressed, "I lie down and have these happy memories."

More of the same awaits the viewer. This film is strongly recommended for showing to all groups-- young or old, professional or laypersons, students or teachers--who can benefit from the positive outlook of such a woman.

Aunt Arie
1975, 18 min. EBEC non-fiction
MPL

Here is an authentic American character, who represents the traditions and folklore of the Blue Ridge Mountains. As she goes about her work--cooking, hoeing, fetching water, sewing a quilt--she spins out the story of her past: "I done everything but plow . . . Mama wouldn't let me marry anybody . . . I learned to make myself not be lonesome . . . " Coupled with her narration are many scenes of the flowers, trees, and hills of the countryside.

The photography is vivid and colorful, but sometimes it is difficult to understand what Aunt Arie is saying because of her accent. The film would be an excellent supplement for junior or high school courses studying Appalachia because it adds a human perspective to the history and sociology of the area.

Birch Canoe Builder
1970, 23 min. ACI non-fiction
UM (7S1041) MPL, StPL

Bill Hafeman, now almost seventy, moved to the north woods years ago in order to free himself from the entanglements of the modern world, where people "go to work with a whistle and come home with a whistle." Over the years he has lived off of the land, hunting and trapping game, and finding peace of mind in his surroundings.

He also became interested in the Indian craft of building birch bark canoes. In his words, "Somebody ought to keep these things going. They belong in the woods country." The film shows all of the steps in the process of building the birch bark canoe, and evidence of Hafeman's craftsmanship is clearly portrayed. He even sews the pieces of bark by hand, using spruce roots he gathers in the woods. He makes so much of what he does look easy, as we would expect when watching a master craftsman at work.

Interspersed with scenes showing the stages of construction are old photographs from the past, providing images of what life was like in the woods in the 1930's. Hafeman also reminisces about his early days in the woods, and he reveals himself as a person concerned with the recovery of timber and wildlife to that area. Some of his stories are good examples of filmed oral history, and it is obvious that Hafeman is a sensitive man committed to passing on the traditions and skills of the past.

This film is recommended for high school and college classes studying American history or ecological and environmental issues, viewers interested in examining significant contributions of native craftsmen, and older audiences, who will be able to relate to the values expressed in the film.

Blessings of Love
1973, 9 min. AB fiction
UM (3S1663)

See Summary of Sequences

Chairmaker and the Boys
1959, 21 min. IFB fiction
StPL

This film tells the simple story of mischievous youth experiencing typical misadventures, despite the warnings of knowing adults. Young Duncan loves to visit his grandfather's, because he can play around the old mill on the farm. One day Duncan and a neighbor boy, while playing inside the mill, climb down into the penstock. Once inside, they can't get back out. When the old man opens the flood gate to the dam so that he can start up the mill, Duncan finally climbs out of the penstock and dashes back to the dam to close its gate, thus saving his friend from being drowned by the onrushing water. After a prompt spanking from his grandfather, Duncan starts for home, but not before a kind wink that tells him he can come another day.

The grandfather is portrayed as a master craftsman, but his character is never fully delineated. He appears to be the stereotypical kind old

man who is the source of all wisdom and experience. The quality of the acting is poor throughout, and the quality of the narrative is affected by the tendency of the narrator to speak much of the characters' dialogue. The only suitable audience for this film is very young children, and even then its use would be limited because of the simplistic narrative.

Death of a Gandy Dancer
1977, 26 min. LCA fiction
UM (7S1580) MPL

This is a remarkable film that will likely have a powerful effect on members of the audience. Ben Matthews, who lives with his daughter and son-in-law, and their son Josh, does not know he has an inoperable cancer. When the doctor tells the daughter and her husband of the cancer, she decides it would be wrong to tell Ben. We soon learn, however, that her decision is partly motivated by her own fears of facing the reality of her father's death; soon she is encouraging him to believe that his pain is only symptoms of bursitis.

Many awkward and tense confrontations result from the parents' inability to deal with this problem, but this conflict is set against the warm and loving relationship between Ben and his grandson, Josh. Ben is Josh's mentor, passing on traditions and teaching him skills, such as how to tap maple trees, and always encouraging the boy to discover his own potential. Their close relationship is further portrayed when Ben, a former railroad employee, is able to take Josh on an exciting ride in an old boxcar. These scenes are especially touching because we can see how much the old man cares for his grandson. Unfortunately, when Ben and an engineer friend show Josh some "gandy dancing" (laying railroad track), this warm interlude turns to tragedy--Ben collapses and has to be taken home.

At home the daughter continues to withhold the truth from Ben, even when he realizes he has "never felt like this before." The old man's pain creates more stress in the family, and the tension builds to an inevitable climax. In a Thanksgiving dinner scene, which contains overwhelming emotional content, Ben confronts the family with his realization that he is dying, and he expresses his anger at having been lied to. His courage and honesty remove all obstacles created by the family's fear of death. Ben accepts his death and prepares to die at home. On his death bed, he calls Josh to come to him, and although he is unable to speak to the boy, we feel that he is reaching out to Josh in a special way. After Ben's death, we see how that special relationship is manifested in the boy's approach to life. Josh goes out to tap all of the maple trees by himself, and he works skillfully and patiently, just as Ben had. We see here the value of the continuity of experience, passed on from the older person to the very young.

Like Peege, this film allows us to identify with a young boy who confronts the reality of his grandparent's impending death; like Peege, this film present a mother and father who are caught up in their own fears about getting old and facing death; but unlike Peege, this film does not conclude with family members isolated from one another. Ben's death brings the family together and resolves their fears even as it focuses on the meaning this experience will have for Josh. The film is strongly recommended for those interested in studying the effect of death on family relationships, the importance of strong intergenerational bonds, the ability of the old to

deal with crises in their own lives, and the role of older people in passing along traditions and skills to younger members of the family. The film makes a significant contribution to the study of aging, and its use can be applied to a wide range of audiences.

The Detour
1977, 13 min. PHENIX fiction
UM (5S1567) MPL

See Summary of Sequences

The Father
1970, 28 min. NLC b & w fiction
MPL

This stark, depressing film, based on Chekhov's short story, stars Burgess Meredith as a desolate, weary old man who drives a hansom in New York's Central Park. The two important things in Captain Ned's life are his horse and "a lad named Steven Patrick," his son. Ned repeatedly brings up the latter subject to his disinterested, unsympathetic clients, and through a series of fragmented scenes it becomes clear that Ned's son is actually dead. The film follows Ned through a long day of work, which begins at dawn and ends after midnight on New Year's Eve. At the end of the film Ned returns to the stable to bed down his horse and ruminate on the loss of his son.

Because of its complex structure and theme, use of the film will be limited to those audiences who have a serious interest in film study. The film's portrayal of aging is a negative and depressing one, and because of its harsh realism the film is recommended for audiences ranging from college students to adults.

Foxfire
1973, 21 min. MGHF non-fiction

Foxfire is based on the excellent work done by Eliot Wigginton in a small Georgia school, where he motivates his students to learn more about their local area, including the people, traditions, skills, and folklore that is available to them. The film shows his young students interviewing people who possess certain skills or knowledge of various traditions so the students can compile their data and edit it into their magazine. The film promotes the Foxfire concept and is aimed at a junior and senior high school audience.

Grandpa
1970, 29 min. FI b & w non-fiction
UM (6S1628)

"Do as I advise you and you'll never go wrong. It's to your advantage that you should do as I advise you." These statements best characterize

the relationship between the filmmaker and his grandfather, the subject of the film. Grandpa is a biographical portrait of an ambitious, successful businessman who at 86 is still involved with the day-to-day operations of the business he started. But the filmmaker adds a uniquely personal dimension in his depiction of the older man's incessant stream of advice aimed at his grandson.

The grandfather's reminiscences recreate vividly the life of poor Jewish immigrants in New York City at the turn of the century, and his memories of his father, who worked eleven hours a day to raise his family, are sensitive and revealing of his own character. "I loved him passionately," he says of his father. But his concern is also with the future, and specifically with what his grandson intends to do with his life. He wants his grandson to get more involved with the family business, but the boy is more interested in filmmaking. "You're the most stubborn man I've ever met. For stupidity and stubbornness, you have the most of any man I know," says his grandfather.

Despite some of the bitter words expressed, it becomes evident to the viewer that the old man means well, because he values the happiness and success of his family above anything else. This film is recommended for educators who are interested in family studies, oral history, and intergenerational conflicts. Suitable audiences would range from college students to adults. Older audiences certainly will be able to relate to the old man's attitudes.

Greenhouse
1973, 11 min. BARR fiction
MPL

This film is a sentimental tale of a young boy who learns the responsibility and pain of maturity under the guiding hand of an older man. The story is told from the point of view of the adult looking back on a crucial time in his life.

"People are either wreckers or builders. I was a wrecker." The film begins with the young man's vandalism of the old man's greenhouse. When he is caught by the old man, he has to repair the damage he caused. This lesson changes his attitude toward the old man, and soon they become friends. Later, when someone else vandalizes the greenhouse, the boy cheers up the man by getting right to work to repair the broken glass.

This simple story does not allow for the development of the old man's character. He is depicted as a kindly old man who renders incorrigible boys responsible citizens. Aimed at young audiences (elementary to junior high), this film will do little to make young people more aware of who older people really are.

Halvor Landsverk: Woodcarver
1973, 30 min. UM non-fiction
UM (7F0513) MPL, StPL

This film provides an intimate portrait of Halvor Landsverk, a craftsman and artist from Highland Prairie, Minnesota. Landsverk has become well known for the Norwegian log chairs, or kubbestols, he crafts by hand

from forty-inch sections of basswood logs. One of the aims of the film is to show the process of completing the kubbestol, beginning with the choice of appropriate trees to use for the logs. After the logs are roughed out, Landsverk dries them for up to one year. When the wood is cured, he traces designs on the outer surfaces and uses a router to get rid of excess wood. Up to this point he admits there has been no art in his work. But then he gets out his carving tools and beings the laborious process of cutting details of his designs into the wood. Here we see the patient hand of the artist at work, and when he completes the ornate designs and sells the chair, we can understand that somehow the work of art has become part of his life, and that giving it up evokes a feeling of loss.

The artist is revealed through this portrait as a humble, sensitive man who believes that "art flourishes best in a home where there is perfect happiness among the members." His reminiscences of his father suggest that close family ties have long been important to him. A profoundly religious aspect of Landsverk's character is revealed when we see a wood carving of the Last Supper he made for his church.

Landsverk is truly an American character, and viewers of this film will gain an understanding of the sensitivity and commitment of a modern craftsman whose artistic and religious values are the basis for all of his work. The film is recommended for use in high school and college art classes, especially those that emphasize the continuity of the folk arts in a rural American setting. Religious groups and older audiences will relate well to the values expressed in the film.

Homespun
1955, 20 min. EBEC non-fiction
UM (5X0029) MPL, StPL

The technical quality of this film is seriously flawed; the choice of shots, editing, and composition of shots is of poor quality. The only sound used is background music and narration, primarily by Ms. Oberg, whose Swedish accent is sometimes difficult to understand. The viewer does not really come to know this woman or her husband, who built almost all of the tools she needs for spinning and weaving. Instead, the film present step-by-step the process of spinning and weaving, from the shearing of the angora sheep to the final weaving on a handmade loom. Those who might want to use the film should keep in mind that some of the technical limitations may detract from the presentation of the art and craftsmanship displayed by this woman.

I Think They Call Him John
1970, 26 min. MMA b & w non-fiction

This unpretentious film is a sensitive story of a lonely man, a retired miner, who lives alone in a small, but well-maintained apartment in a large city. We see one day in John's life. He spends the entire day inside, carrying out such daily activities as getting dressed, making meals, cleaning the apartment, writing letters, watching television, ironing. This is the texture of John's life, and the viewer is forced to experience it moment by depressing moment. This is a slow-moving film that moves slow for a purpose. We learn a great deal about John in this way, and a narrator provides

additional information, and even a moral--"If we don't care, who will learn to care?"

This film is aimed at raising the awareness of our neglect of older people, and as such, it is suitable for use in various educational settings, saving some time for discussion. The film would be appropriate for an audience that would range from college-aged students to adults.

Imogen Cunningham: Photographer
1972, 20 min. TIMLIF non-fiction
UM (2F0722)

John Korty, who directed the award-winning The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman, creates another vivid portrait of an indomitable spirit Imogen Cunningham. Korty provides viewers with solid biographical material on the artist's professional development, from her beginnings in the early 1900's to her famous studies of plant forms and portraits of Hollywood greats. At 89 she still works in her darkroom, often making prints of old negatives. If she is asked when she will retire, she answers, "When I can't focus anymore."

But the director also gives us an intimate portrait of an active, spirited woman who enjoys life. An accurate description of her character is reflected in her own words on Gertrude Stein: "A woman with so much style she could ignore fashion." This film is a positive, uplifting study of one person's art and aging, and it is strongly recommended for those interested in photography as an art form, the contribution of women to American art, and the ability of older people to maintain an active, purposeful life. Appropriate audiences would range from high school students to adults.

The Keymaker
1970, 18 min. USC fiction
StPL

This is a complex film that will mean different things to different people. Living alone, a troubled old man seeks conversation and companionship with others, but his encounters with other old people provide him with no sustenance. Everyone seems to have given up the struggle for life--all vital signs in them have terminated. The older man is different; he plays with children and does silly things. He is drawn again and again to a mysterious light he has seen through a chink in a brick wall. At the end of the film viewers finally see what is inside, and the image they see will undoubtedly lead to interesting and possibly frustrating speculation as to the story's meaning.

The fragmentation and complexity of the film makes it suitable primarily to adult audiences, and specifically introductory and/or advanced film study audiences. Its portrayal of aging is sometimes simplistic and even stereotypical.

The Lady and the Owl
1975, 28 min. WOMBAT non-fiction
MPL, StPL

If it is true that owls are the least understood of the birds, then

watching this film will help viewers understand and appreciate these mysterious creatures. For ten years Kay McKeever and her husband have devoted themselves to the recovery and rehabilitation of injured owls. Kay especially is fascinated by the owls, and the film reveals her dedication and sensitive interaction with these animals. Excellent photography and editing make this film a rewarding viewing experience. Although the film does not deal directly with concepts of aging, it will be suitable for audiences interested in biology, ecology, and nature study. The film shows what people can do when they commit themeselves to helping animals and learning more about their specific characteristics.

The Last Leaf
1952, 23 min. UISSC b & w fiction
UM (4L0256)

Based on the O. Henry story, this film presents the story of an aged painter who saves a young woman's life through his compassion and skill as an artist. In the middle of winter, a young woman lies seriously ill. The old artist, who lives upstairs, tries to help the girl and her older sister, but the girl's condition grows worse.

The young girl becomes obsessed with the leaves from the vine that clings to the brick wall outside her window. As the wind blows them away, she begins to believe that when the last leaf is torn from the vine by the wind, her life will depart with it. When the old man learns of the girl's fears, he works hard through a winter night to paint a realistic image of a leaf on the brick wall. Although he dies from exposure, his "last leaf" inspires the girl to struggle for life and to recover from her illness.

Old age here is shown to be responsive to the needs of youth and capable of meaningful art, wisdom, and sacrifice. Although the film is of satisfactory technical quality, some viewers may find the sentiment expressed to be excessive.

Last Stand Farmer
1975, 28 min. SILO non-fiction
UM (7S1492)

See Summary of Sequences

Lifeclimb
1977, 23 min. PFP non-fiction
UM (7S1523) StPL

Stan Zundell, at 57, developed the theory that positive thinking, a good diet, and sustained exercise--all in the context of a spiritual renewal--is the way to live a longer and happier life. Although he was diagnosed as having cancer, heart disease, and arthritis, Zundell devoted himself to overcoming the emotional stress and lack of motivation he

believed furthered the cause of his illness. At 65, the quality of his life has improved. He has climbed the Matterhorn ten times and taker on even more challenging climbs. The narrator says that Stan's approacn can be adapted to any lifestyle. The potential user of this film has to remember that Zundell's approach is a theory, and the film promotes that theory. As a convert, his life is obviously consumed by his application of his ideas. The film may be of interest to senior citizens organizations or groups interested in the improvement of physical and mental health.

Louise Nevelson in Process
1977, 25 min. FI non-fiction
UM (7F0974) MPL

This film is a portrait of Louise Nevelson, whose artistic creed is, "The only reality I recognize is my reality." She is a modern woman who lives in the present: "I can't afford to look back."

Most of the film is devoted to showing her directing one of her projects, a monumental metal sculpture. Combined with related scenes, we see examples of her art. We learn about the purpose of art, the sources of creativity, the role of the artist in society, and the effect of art on the populace. Nevelson does not choose to deal with many personal aspects of her life. In this sense, the film is about Louise Nevelson--not about our attitudes toward aging, the role of older people in society, or what essential qualities are embodied in the lives of older persons. The film would be strongly recommended for use in classes in arts in society, art history, and women's studies.

Love it Like a Fool
1977, 23 min. RH non-fiction
UM (7F0134)

"Who is that white-haired singer?" Answering her own ques ion is Malvina Reynolds, a folk singer and activist who is the subject of this film: "The word grandmother puts something on me that does not belong there. It puts me in the rocking chair."

Anyone viewing this film will conclude that Malvina Reynolds is not ready for the rocking chair. The film is filled with her music and philosophy of life. As a young woman with a musical background, she found that poetry and music came together: "Everything I thought began to turn into song." Her music includes the famous song on the perils of conformity--"Little Boxes"--and we see her performing that number with Pete Seeger, who made the song famous in the 1950's. She sings all or part of seven other songs in the film.

Her philosophy of life is revealed through the lyrics of her songs, her commitment to activism, and her attitude toward aging. A vital person, she offers a positive image of aging. This film is recommended for audiences interested in women's studies, the history of American folk songs, and aging--as it applies to the attitudes necessary for a positive outlook on life. Suitable audiences would range from high school students to adults.

Mailbox
1977, 30 min. BYU fiction
UM (7S1547) MPL

See Summary of Sequences

Mandy's Grandmother
1978, 30 min. PHENIX fiction
MPL

Mandy is a ten-year-old tomboy, who wears jeans, loves horses, and has a pet toad. When she learns that her grandmother from England is coming to visit the family, she tries to prepare for the upcoming visit. She goes to the library and asks for the "grandmother section." The librarian shows her a book that is obviously aimed at the very young reader, for it portrays grandmothers as kindly, gray-haired ladies who wear their hair up in a bun and hold children in their laps in rocking chairs. But a surprise is in store for Mandy, for her grandmother is an attractive, vivacious woman who is still in the prime of her life. Since Mandy has refused to accept some of the social graces expected of little girls, her grandmother's repeated attempts to treat "Amanda"--as she prefers to call her--like the proper little girl she imagines her to be, lead to a serious conflict.

Eventually the two confront each other in a dramatic scene. On the verge of tears, the older woman shares her feelings with Mandy openly, revealing some of her fears and insecurity. These reminiscenes touch Mandy, and she reaches out to her grandmother. Their conflict resolved, the two begin to enjoy each other. Now grandmother pays attention to the things Mandy is interested in: her horse, her pet toad, the run-down boat she plays with. Their shared experiences unite them, and when her grandmother prepares to leave for England, Mandy doesn't want her to leave. But both agree that their friendship and love will sustain them.

In its crisp photography and editing the film has the texture of Peege and Portrait of Grandpa Doc. One of the aims of the film is to help younger audiences relate to the intergenerational conflicts portrayed, and the message for older people apparently is that they need to approach the very young not with their image of what little girls and boys are like, based on what children were like in their own early years, but with an open mind to the values of individuality and openness the young now possess. The film leaves the viewer with a happing feeling about how well children and older people can relate to one another, although the early section of the film is somewhat contrived in its characterization of Mandy's grandmother as a bubbly Nanny with old-fashioned values. Nevertheless, the portrayal of their growing friendship is effective and heartwarming.

This film is strongly recommended for showing to young audiences,who will be able to identify with Mandy's attitudes and values.

Maple Sugar Farmer
1973, 29 min. ACI non-fiction
StPL

This film is an excellent example of filmed oral history. The purpose of the film is to describe in detail the process of making maple syrup and maple sugar, from the tapping of the trees to the boiling of the syrup. Another aim is to acquaint us with the life and philosophy of Sherman Graff, the maple sugar farmer.

Instead of separating the description of the process from the delineation of a man's past life and values, the film moves back and forth between the two, attempting to weave Mr. Graff's knowledge of the process into the fabric of his life, based on the use of old photographs and his reminiscences of significant events from the past. Nevertheless, this separation seems forced at times, and the scenes reconstructing the past through the photographs (even adding sound effects to try to help us experience the action) often seem contrived. "We have undoubtedly lost something," Mr. Graff laments, but the impact of his nostalgia is lessened because the force of his character is not sufficiently revealed to the audience. He is most interesting as the maple sugar farmer, the kind of man whose knowledge about this aspect of nature is fast disappearing in our complex society.

The film is useful for showing to audiences who are interested in learning the details of a process of what is becoming another "lost art," and learning how life was lived around the turn of the century. It may not be suitable for health care professionals who are interested in communicating specific concepts about aging.

Martin the Cobbler
1977, 28 min. BBF fiction
UM (9L0877) MPL

See Summary of Sequences

My Grandson Lew
1976, 13 min. BARR fiction
UM (5S1532)

A young boy wakes up in the middle of the night, and troubled by thoughts of his grandfather, he finds his mother so he can tell her he misses him. Surprised, she asks him what he remembers of Grandpa. The boy shares several memories, of the times Grandpa would give him "big eye hugs," or hold him on his lap, or take him to the museum. The mother is touched by these memories, just as she is saddened to tell the boy his grandfather died some time ago. She had not told him because he never asked about his grandpa.

Then she shares some of her memories of her father. When Lew was born, his Grandpa came to the hospital and held him tenderly, calling him "My Granson Lew." Having a chance to talk this way, both are able to return to bed, feeling much better because of their communication.

This film is photographed in warm colors, and the scenes from the past are composed like romantic set-pieces. Grandpa even has a splendid white beard and warm, liquid eyes. Although the sentiment sometimes oozes from the screen, the film does at least present the dilemma of how hard it is to tell a child about death. The film would be suitable for showing to young audiences, perhaps as part of religious education, or to health care staffs or older age groups, in order to elicit some response concerning the importance of nurturing relationships between the old and the very young.

Nell and Fred
1971, 29 min. MGHF b & w non-fiction
UM (7S1416)

See Summary of Sequences

Never Give Up--Imogen Cunningham
1975, 28 min. PHENIX non-fiction
MPL, StPL

Filmed three years after John Korty's Imogen Cunningham: Photographer, this portrait of the artist is less compelling, partly because it presents Ms. Cunningham as an eccentric old woman whose philosophy of life is tinged with some bitterness. As in the case of the other film, we learn many aspects of her biography, including several examples of her photographic work, and we also learn some of her attitudes toward aging and death. But much of the film is devoted to fanciful and impressionistic scenes, which do not in the end reveal a great deal about her character.

Old-Fashioned Woman
1974, 49 min. FI non-fiction
UM (1H0892)

The filmmaker Martha Coolidge presents an affectionate portrait of her grandmother, Mabel Tilton Coolidge. Mabel is an interesting woman, and we learn about her through old photographs of her life as a young girl, her years in college, and her married life. We also see her as an accompanist for a small choir. Much of the film is devoted to the filmmaker's personal relationship to her grandmother, and the intimate nature of the film reflects the granddaughter's attempt to gain perspective on her ties with the past. Martha Coolidge also attempts to generalize from her grandmother's experience, but Mabel is not an articulate spokesperson for this subject. Her one statement on aging: "Growing older is very disappointing, because you have to give up things you've been doing all your life."

Nevertheless, this is an important film for those who want to learn more about the status of women in the early years of the century--as told from a woman's point of view. It also deals significantly with the relationship between a grandmother and a granddaughter, noting some of the ways the values of women have been passed on.

The Old Woman
1973, 2 min. ACI fiction

This brief animated film will delight audiences in its portrayal of an old woman who is too busy to die. Even when death comes to her door, ready to take her with him, she pushes him aside tc do some cleaning, make dinner, and work on a quilt--which is so long and will require so much time to finish that . . . This film is strongly recommended for its positive image of aging. It will serve as an excellent interlude between the showing of films that are more emotionally charged.

One-Eyed Men Are Kings
1974, 15 min. MGHF fiction
UM (5L0724) MPL, StPL

See Summary of Sequences

Passing Quietly Through
1970, 20 min. GROVE b & w fiction

Mr. Brick is one of the many older people who live out desolate existences in one-room apartments in shabby hotels. An invalid, he is visited every day by a Public Health nurse. When we see her arrive for her morning's visit, at first she is brusque and impersonal, viewing her job as unpleasant, and thinking of Mr. Brick as one of the many "miserable ordinary failures" she feeds and bathes each day.

But Mr. Brick's force of character is too great to suppress. While she gives him his "nice bath," he speaks frankly and even crudely about his sexual frustrations. When she suggests he go to a nursing home, he snaps, "Not with all those people dying. That smell." Later, he adds, "How would you like to be in a home with a hundred people who are in as much misery as I'm in?" The more she tries to remain indifferent to him, the more he is frank in his assessment of his situation, bitterly revealing his anger and loneliness. Finally, she responds to his question, "Are you lonely at night?" She recalls the early years of her marriage, when she experienced uncertainty and loneliness. Based on this sharing of feelings, he concludes, "All we have to do is be missed by someone when we're gone. And maybe I will miss you, because I told you something about myself." As she leaves him for the day, she says, "Save up your energy old man. Then you can rage on in the morning."

This film is a stark and depressing portrayal of old age. The dialogue, which includes crude language, is sometimes hard to follow because of a poor sound track. The film is not recommended for general audiences because of its explicit realism, but it would be useful for professionals who want to emphasize the anger, frustration, and fears that people may experience in old age. The film should be previewed carefully before its intended use.

Peege
1974, 28 min. PHENIX fiction
UM (7S1263) MPL, StPL

See Summary of Sequences

Portrait of Grandpa Doc
1977, 30 min. PHENIX fiction
UM (7S1564) MPL, StPL

This film is often advertised as a sequel to Peege, because members of the same family are highlighted in it. Greg, the son from California who returns after eight years to see his grandmother Peege, is now a successful artist in Los Angeles. In the sense that Portrait of Grandpa Doc continues Greg's story, it may be termed a sequel to Peege. But the film attempts to be a sequel in another, more substantial way. Greg and his mother did not enjoy a warm relationship in Peege, and in this film that relationship becomes the focus of the story.

In the film Greg plans his first one-man show at a gallery and invites his mother to attend on opening night. But he refuses to tell her the subject of the exhibit. We see him begin his work, looking through old pictures, including old home movies, that focus on his early years. It becomes clear that he is seeking inspiration from memories of his grandfather, who is depicted as a sensitive and insightful man. In all of these flashbacks, Grandpa Doc is shown noticing Greg's artistic qualities, whereas his mother seems interested only in making sure Greg is like the other boys. As he recalls the past, he paints familiar scenes, finishing at last the portrait of Grandpa Doc.

His mother arrives for the art show, and when she sees the paintings at the gallery, she is in her words "wiped out" because of Greg's ability to recreate pleasant memories. When she sees the portrait of Grandpa Doc, she breaks down, and Greg takes her away so they can be alone. They talk about Grandpa Doc, sharing personal feelings about his death. Greg's mother concludes, "We've never talked like this before," and as the film ends, they feel much closer to one another.

Portrait of Grandpa Doc lacks the powerful emotional content that has made Peege such a classic film. One serious drawback is that Greg and his mother's relationship is not developed clearly in this film; thus, when the climax occurs, it seems somehow trite or contrived. Still, the scenes that show Grandpa Doc's interaction with Greg and with the other young people who were drawn to him are the strongest part of the film. Aided by Melvyn Douglas' acting, we come to know Grandpa Doc as Greg's mentor, a sensitive and loving man, and it is this aspect of the film that we do not soon forget.

This film is suitable for a wide range of audiences--from young people to adults. It is recommended for use in training health care professionals, despite some of its structural weaknesses, and it would be ideal for showing to older audiences. As another example of how older people inspire the lives of the young, it deserves wide attention.

Portraits of Aging
1978, 30 min. CENTEF non-fiction

"We are all artists, and what is it we create--but our experiences." This conviction underlies the portraits of several older people in this film. As we are introduced to each of these people--a woman playing the piano, a philosopher writing a book, a married couple bird watching, a gardener, a woman recovering from a health problem, a beekeeper--we see a woman artist sketching their portraits. Each person is living the art of their age, and each portrait emphasizes their positive attitude toward life.

The determination and hope of older people are highlighted in scenes that focus on a 67-year-old woman who has had total knee replacements in both legs. She is shown attending a dance with her beau, who is 84. Her advice: "Try hard--don't give up. Just try to keep looking forward."

The film ends with a strong plea to make known what support services exist for older people and how they may be utilized. Although the portraits do not reveal the depth of character in the subjects presented, the film offers positive examples of aging for older audiences and health care professionals.

Ruth Stout's Garden
1976, 23 min. MOKIN non-fiction
MPL, StPL

This is an excellent film about a remarkable woman, who at 92 has become an authority on a simplified, no-dig method of gardening. Ruth Stout reveals her character through her irrepressible sense of humor and energy. We learn in detail how her practice of gardening works, and we learn her values as well: "Do what you want to do, and don't tell other people how to behave" is an example. Her reminiscences are equally interesting because she is willing to speak freely of the past, again revealing more of herself.

This film will serve as an inspiring example of successful and fulfilling aging to all audiences interested in learning more about the subject--especially health care professionals, religious organizations, senior citizens groups, and nature study or environmental groups.

The Shopping Bag Lady
1975, 21 min. LCA fiction
UM (5E0968) MPL, StPL

The film compares the reactions of two teenaged girls to a lonely old shopping bag lady in New York's Central Park. At first, because of peer pressure, the more sensitive girl, Emily, joins in taunting the old woman. After the girls leave her, the old woman finds a puppet Emily had left behind. It is interesting to note that Emily's grandmother lives with her family. The next day Emily returns to the park, sees the old woman with her puppet, and takes it from her.

Later we see Emily, her friend, and her friend's little brother playing in the park again. The friend notices the old woman talking to the boy, who has strayed some distance from the girls. Emily's friend screams

for a policeman and accuses the old woman of trying to kidnap her brother. After the policeman takes the old woman away, Emily retrieves the shopping bags. That night Emily is drawn to look into the bags and begins to sift through the contents, including an old photograph album. In a well-conceived scene Emily discovers that Annie, the shopping bag lady, had a youth of her own. Emily is especially touched by one picture of Annie at 14--her own age.

The next day she talks to the policeman who had taken Annie away. Finding out that Annie is in a hospital, she visits the old woman, bringing her shopping bags and the puppet. She leaves with a greater sense of understanding this woman as a person. The next time she is in the park, she notices her grandmother sitting on a bench. Emily initiates a conversation and the two walk off together, interested in learning more about each other.

This film is directed at a junior or senior high school audience. The aspect of the film that deals with the insensitivity of youth toward older people and the influence of peer pressure is somewhat contrived, but important to the film's meaning. The strongest part of the film is Emily's private and personal discovery that Annie was once a girl just like her. The positive effect that discovery has on her relationship with her own grandmother shows how much Emily has learned. The importance of identifying with others--including older people--is a significant message in this film.

Spider
1972, 7 min. FI non-fiction
MPL

In this brief film we are introduced to Spider, a remarkable short order cook at a small restaurant called Paul's Diner. Seeing Spider at work is a rare treat, for the man has made an art out of what many people consider a dull routine. An ex-boxer, he always keeps moving, as if sparring with an invisible foe, taking orders, filling his grill with deft movements, flipping orders, making salads in seconds, cutting sandwiches with one swish of his knife. But when he is asked about his work, he retorts, "If this was work I wouldn't do it."

Unfortunately, Spider is too busy moving to answer the questions asked of him with any detail. The poor sound quality and lighting also detract from the viewer's appreciation of the film. Although his answers are elusive, he still is a delight to watch, and it is a wonder Charles Kerault hasn't found Spider.

The Steps of Age
1951, 25 min. IFB b & w fiction
UM (6S0660) MPL

The film focuses on the trials of an elderly widow who struggles for love and acceptance from her family after her husband dies. Although this film is dated, it makes some valid points on the subject of aging: e.g., widows often blame themselves for the disappointment and despair experienced by their husbands, and children of older parents often resent the presence of the grandparent in their homes. Unfortunately, the blatant

use of simplistic generalizations about aging and the poor quality of acting and film techniques may leave modern viewers uninterested.

Sticky My Fingers--Fleet My Feet
1973, 23 min. TIMLIF fiction
UM (7E0958) StPL

This is a humorous film that explores the fantasies of middle-aged men who relive their youth in weekend games of touch football. We see the men imitate the rituals of professional players as they ready themselves for the field of battle--Central Park. Only one reminder of their mortality exists: a fifteen-year-old nephew of one of the men, who joins in their play. As the game begins, Norman, one of the gladiators, catches a few passes and revels in his heroics. His greatness, however, is soon overshadowed by the young boy, who outruns and outmaneuvers all of the men--including Norman--ruining the men's fantasy. Defeated, the men head for home, and Norman admits, "If you live long enough, you grow old." Back at home, however, safe in a hot bath, he fantasizes again.

Much of the charm of this film can be found in the running commentary the character Norman provides as the action unfolds. Suitable audiences would range from high school students to adults.

The Street
1976, 10 min. NFBC fiction
UM (3S1469) MPL, StPL

This film uses a unique form of animation, in which characters are drawn in vivid shades of color, like watercolors come to life. When a character appears, we see him unfold on the screen as if the artist is drawing the character and filling in the color at the same time.

"The summer my grandmother was supposed to die--or as my mother said, 'pass away,' we didn't leave the city." So announces the young boy, whose grandmother dies at home. Because the story is told from the boy's point of view, it makes several insightful comments on the way adults face death. More important, it illuminates the fear and insecurity--as well as the bewilderment--that children face when death occurs in the family.

This remarkable film is strongly recommended to audiences interested in studying the effect of death on family relationships. The reactions of all members of the family, and even their close friends, are depicted with a gentle sense of humor and pathos through the dialogue and action. In no way is the film a grim look at death. At the same time the film is not simply a light sketch that ignores the seriousness of the subject.

Although younger audiences will identify with the boy's attitude, some of the subconscious fears portrayed in the boy's reactions will need to be explained to younger viewers. Adult audiences, including health care professionals and religious educators, will gain many insights from the film.

The String-Bean
1964, 17 min. MGHF fiction
UM (5F0640), MPL, StPL

See Summary of Sequences

Taking Care of Mother Baldwin
1969, 20 min. PERSPF b & w fiction
UM (4S0104)

This is a slow-moving film that employs the stark realism of black and white photography to explore a relationship betweeen a young black boy and an old black woman, who lives in a poor neighborhood. The boy seems to come and go, helping her cut some firewood, but then engaging in mischief. There is no meaningful interaction between the young boy and the old woman, and Mother Baldwin's character does not take on any significance through the film. Suitable use may be limited to film study classes dealing with cultural issues. There is little relevance to the study of aging here.

Though I Walk Through the Valley
1971, 30 min. PFP non-fiction
UM (7S1436)

Tony Brower, a middle-aged man, is dying of cancer. Although the film shows the progressive stages of his physical decline, it also reveals Tony and his wife's growing sense of spiritual well-being. Reflecting on his condition, his wife says, "It's not terminal in the sense that it's the end of Tony." Both agree that "nothing can separate us from the love of God." The film is a tribute to Tony and his wife's courage and faith as they face his inevitable death. Suitable for adult audiences, the film is recommended especially for use by religious educators and health care professionals.

Tomorrow Again
1971, 16 min. PFP b & w fiction
UM (4S1438)

An aged woman, who lives alone in a shabby hotel room, goes down to the lobby one day, wearing an old mink stole. She hopes she will be noticed by some of the men, who will say, "Hello, Grace. You look lovely today." But she is ignored by all the men, who sit immobile, isolated from one another. Crushed by their indifference, she returns to her room, and after crying for a moment, opens a brown bag and prepares to eat an apple for her lunch.

Woven into this simple, desperate story is an intriguing series of fragmented scenes that underscore the tragedy of Grace's existence. At separate points in the film we see, from what appears to be Grace's point of view, chilling scenes of people in the hallway looking down at her, policemen hovering above her as they move down a stairway, and later a neighbor woman, who leans over to ask, "Granny? Are you all right?" Each time such a scene appears, we wonder if we are seeing snatches of scenes that will be combined to form the last scene of the film--when Grace suffers a heart attack or stroke. But this does not happen.

Tomorrow Again is a stark portrayal of a lonely woman, and it makes a powerful statement on the effects of isolation and the inability to reach out to others. Grace struggles to be recognized as a person, but she encounters people who have withdrawn from any human contact. Because of its complex structure, this film is recommended for classes in film

study, but it may also be useful for health care professionals, who will want to stress the desolation and loneliness that occur when older people are isolated.

The Transformation of Mabel Wells
1975, 17 min. XEROXF fiction
UM (5S1537)

See Summary of Sequences

The Violin
1973, 24 min. LCA fiction
UM (7L0359)

This film presents the story of a solitary old man, a violinist, who lives alone in a cottage in the country. Through a set of circumstances he finds an old violin, discarded by two young boys, who had spent their life's savings to buy it--only to discover that they made more noise than music with it. Taking the violin up, the old man begins to play a song. Drawn to the old man, the older boy learns from him how to play the instrument, but he and his younger brother learn more importantly the values of trust and friendship.

Although this film is a romantic story portraying the old man as a kind grandfatherly figure, its masterful film technique and poignant, humorous depiction of the boys' trials, makes it a worthwhile film to use in elementary education, religious education, and for showing to older adults, where the importance of strong relationshiops between the old and the very young can be stressed.

The Violin Maker
1972, 30 min. ACI non-fiction
UM (7F0062)

Since 1938 Jack Batts has lived in Johnson City, Illinois, a small rural town, where he owns a quaint shop on Main Street. There he builds and repairs violins. The film portrays Mr. Batts as a skilled craftsman, an artist, and a man with enduring values. He explains how he builds his violins, noting the importance of using fine seasoned wood for the frame and steel tools for carving, which contribute to "building a soul into the instrument." He recalls with pride that one of his violins was once played in a concert in Carnegie Hall; this is the "additional pay" that is the reward of the craftsman.

He is an unpretentious man who nevertheless reveals himself to be a sensitive, caring person in his interaction with other people. We see him pause on the sidewalk to talk to his neighbors, and near the end of the film we see him playing one of his violins, accompanied by two of his friends in the privacy of his home. He makes it clear that the three would never think of performing in front of an audience--their playing is for their personal recreation.

At one point he recalls the words of Socrates: "A man worthy of anything should never be concerned with living and dying, but only whether what he is doing is right or wrong." Whether Jack Batts knows

it or not, that statement accurately reflects his attitude toward life. This film was done by the same filmmakers who made Birch Canoe Builder, and in its portrayal of a man who is an artist as well as a craftsman, it is comparable to Halvor Landsverk: Woodcarver. Even more than these two films, however, The Violin Maker presents a highly articulate spokesperson for the values of craftsmanship, the quality of art and its place in society, and the importance of belonging to a community, making contributions wherever possible. The film is strongly recommended for those interested in oral history, American culture, and the relationship between the individual and the community. Suitable audiences would range from high school students to adults.

Weekend
1973, 10 min. MMA fiction
UM (5S1651)

See Summary of Sequences

Who Cares
1970, 13 min. SF fiction
UM (5S0968)

Three generations living under one roof cause a myriad of problems for a family in this film about the difficulty of resolving intergenerational conflict. When grandfather moves in, the children complain about his obnoxious habits and slovenly appearance. But their mother stands up for the grandfather, excusing his outrageous behavior with truisms like, "When a man gets that old . . . Now it's time we looked after him . . . He doesn't realize what he's doing."

The lack of communication between members of the family is evident throughout the film, and one might speculate that until communication is improved, there can be no hope of changing the pattern of relating that has been established. Unfortunately, what is potentially a strong statement on the complexity of intergenerational relationships is marred by poor film techniques and bad acting. The characterizations in the film lack the depth and subtly one might expect in the portrayal of such a complex set of conflicts. Educators and professionals interested in this area of aging are recommended to consider other films.

The Wild Goose
1976, 18 min. FI b & w fiction
UM (1S1563) MPL, StPL

This film, like a senior power version of One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, exposes the negative stereotypes of aging that result when we exert unremitting control over older people in our society. The setting: a nursing home in the country. The action: we begin with a silly birthday party where the older people are treated to cartoons and made to act like children--all, that is, except one--the wild goose. He spits out his noisemaker in disgust, but his individuality soon is squelched by two husky Nurse Ratcheds. This pattern of individual expression repressed

by the power of societal control is repeated throughout the film. Each time we see an example of the qualities of humor, imagination, and inventiveness reflected in the older people, they are subdued by their caretakers. Finally, however, the wild goose escapes the flock to the delight of the other "inmates" in the home.

Humor, sarcasm, and parody abound in this film, and its often irreverent attitude toward aging may at first upset some people. Its intent, however, is to encourage us all to consider the individual qualities of older persons rather than viewing them only as members of a clearly defined group.

The film would be suitable for use in introductory film courses (focus on editing, combination of sound and image), in settings appropriate for health care professionals (for training purposes), and for anyone interested in an expression of the uniqueness and humor of older persons.

Youth, Maturity, Old Age
1975, 8 min. EBEC fiction
UM (3F0703)

Marcel Marceau pantomimes the stages of life in this poignant film. Poised like a flower ready to blossom, the child struggles to begin life, strides proudly and effortlessly through youth, and then gradually weakens in maturity until it falters, grows smaller and withers, returning at last to the position it began the cycle with, closed upon itself, at rest. In a matter of minutes, the pantomimist suggests the range of human experience. This film would be useful in stimulating one's study of aging because it engages the viewer's emotions and encourages the viewer to examine some of the common stereotypes that control our attitude toward the subject.

LIST OF DISTRIBUTORS

AB
Audio Brandon Films
8400 Brookfield Ave.
Brookfield, IL 60513
(800) 323-4881

ACI
ACI Productions
35 West 45th St., 11th floor
New York, NY 10036
(800) 221-2228

BARR
Barr Films
3490 East Foothill Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91107
(213) 793-6153

BFA
Bailey Film Association
2211 Michigan Ave.
Santa Monica, CA 90404
(213) 660-0187

BBF
Billy Budd Films
235 East 57th St.
New York, NY 10022
(212) 755-3968

BYU
Brigham Young University
West 164 Stadium
Provo, UT 84602
(801) 374-1211

CENTEF
Centron Educational Films
1621 West 9th St., Box 687
Lawrence, KS 66044
(913) 843-0400

EBEC
Encyclopedia Brittanica
Educational Corporation
425 North Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 321-6800

FI
Films, Inc
1144 Wilmette Ave.
Wilmette, IL 60091
(312) 256-6600

GROVE
Grove Press
196 West Houston St.
New York, NY 10014
(212) 242-4900

GA
Guidance Associates
757 3rd Ave.
New York, NY 10017
(800) 221-4560

IFB
International Film Bureau
332 South Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 427-4545

LSB
LSB Productions
1310 Monaco Dr.
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272
(213) 454-1676

LCA
Learning Corporation of America
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019
(212) 397-9330

MAC
MacMillan Films, Inc.
34 MacQuestin Parkway South
Mt. Vernon, NY 10050
(914) 664-4277

MGHF
McGraw-Hill Films
221 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020
(212) 997-2343

MMA
Mass Media Associates
Box 427
Stewartstown, PA 17363
(800) 233-1903

MOKIN
Arthur Mokin Productions
17 West 60th St.
New York, NY 10023
(212) 757-4868

NFBC
National Film Board of Canada
1251 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020
(212) 586-2400

NLC
New Line Cinema
121 University Place
New York, NY 10003
(212) 674-7460

PAR
Paramount Communications
5451 Marathon St.
Hollywood, CA 90038
(213) 462-0844

PERSPF
Perspective Films
369 West Erie St.
Chicago, IL 60610
(312) 977-4100

PSU
Penn State University
Audio Visual Aids Library
17 Willard Building
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 865-6315

PHENIX
Phoenix Films, Inc.
470 Park Ave. South
New York, NY 10016
(212) 684-5910

PFP
Pyramid Films
Box 1048
Santa Monica, CA 90406
(213) 828-7577

RH
Red Hen Films
1305 Oxford
Berkeley, CA 94709
(415) 843-3214

SILO
Silo Cinema
Box 375
Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417
(201) 871-8240

SPCTRM
Spectrum Motion Pictures Lab
399 Gundersen Dr.
Carol Stream, IL 60187
(312) 665-4242

SF
Sterling Educational Films
241 East 34th St.
New York, NY 10016
(212) 683-6300

TIMLIF
Time-Life Films, Inc.
100 Eisenhower Dr.
Paramus, NJ 07652
(201) 843-4545

UISSDC
Univ. of Indiana Social Studies
Development Center
Bloomington, IN 47401

UM
University of Minnesota
Audio-Visual Library Service
3300 University Ave. S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55414
(612) 373-3810

USC
University of Southern California
Dept. of Cinema, University Park
Los Angeles, CA 90007
(213) 825-0755

WOMBAT
Wombat Productions
Little Lake, Glendale Rd.
Box 70
Ossining, NY 10562
(914) 762-0011

XEROXF
Xerox Films
1250 Fairwood Ave.
Box 444
Columbus, OH 43206